A CANDLE LIGHT

LOUIS SMIRNOW

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"Where a taper erst lighted dispersèd the gloom
From the only small window that faced on the sea."—See Page 40.

Frontispiece.

A CANDLE-LIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

LOUIS SMIRNOW

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To my beloved sister

Flora

these, though not the best,
yet the first fruits of
my labors,
are dedicated.

The Author

Advertisement to a Candle-Light

THE author purposes to produce a collection of poems under the general title of "Portraits From Life," in which will be treated actual events or incidents that may be worthy of recording. That such incidents are not wanting, daily experience furnishes abundant evidence. Should we, then, neglect the sublime and the beautiful or even the ugly and terrible, because they are coexistent with us? On the contrary, nothing more concerns man than Man. For if we attempt to look into his life we behold there Infinity, and when we look into his soul we perceive the sublimity of Heaven on the one hand and the depravity of Hell on the other. When, therefore, we present, however slightly, to our discerning minds some passages of the universal drama, in varying degrees, now comical and now tragical, that is being uninterruptedly enacted on the stage of the world, we at once treat of a subject a grander or more important than which there is not.

Advertisement to a Candle-Light

Realizing that Reality, from its very nature, is more deserving than Ideality, however lofty the latter may be carried on the wings of imagination and art, there seems to be no need of apology for intruding poems like these on the notice of the public, on whose reception, however, of the first ones shall depend the appearance of those to follow.

New Britain.

Note —This poem was written in spare intervals between July 17 and October 15, 1899, while a larger work was being prepared. The third canto was written in the last twelve days.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Dr. L. Smirnow was born in 1874. He educated himself, making the world his school and mankind his tutor. He chose the medical profession and entered Yale Medical School when quite young, paying his own way through college, and graduating in 1895.- During the next year he served a term with one of the large hospitals in Connecticut and then opened an office in New Haven. A little later he removed to New Britain, devoting his leisure time to literary work, and within two years produced an epic poem which is a monumental work. As a result of a recent visit to the West Indies, he has written "Martinique" and other poems in this collection. In childhood he was a phenomenal scholar in Hebrew and used to be exhibited by his tutors as an example of their work.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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A CANDLE-LIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

A Candle-Light*

Canto I.

I RELATE here no story of triumph and fame,
Nor of conqueror's glory nor conqueror's name,
Nor of heroes who fought in the battles of men,
Nor of such that wrought change by the use of
their pen,
Nor of them that wild regions of earth can explore,
Nor of those that to nations teach wisdom and lore,

---

* The real facts of the case are briefly thus: A sailor, going on a voyage, desired his sweetheart to light each night a candle in her window, until he returns. He was never seen or heard from again; but his love kept her word up to the time she died, at the age of about seventy, requesting of her survivors still to continue the light in the lattice. All other incidents and characters are fictitious additions for the elaboration of the story.

Nor of them that great fortunes and wealth have
amass'd,
Or that, pleased with success, were not pleased to
the last.
I shall tell no great deeds by small people achieved,
Nor of favors or boons from weak monarchs re-
ceived,
Nor of courtiers' obeisances, nimble and low,
Nor of ladies of court with attendant and beau,
On her right, on her left, in the front and the rear,
Ever waiting upon her each day of the year.
Nor of subjects that ceaselessly trouble the mind,
Nor of questions that constantly stir up mankind,
But of human affection in purest of form
That's untainted by passion nor weaken'd by storm,
Nor diminished by years of mischance and ill-fate,
Nor abolished by death who is never too late,—
Although death in his hurry cuts everything short,
Save the love of the victim whom just he had
caught.
And our scene shall not be a palatial château
On a landscape serene or a quiet plateau,
Nor a millionaire's home nor a rich man's abode,
Nor a nobleman's house on a nobleman's road,
But a cottage as lowly as lowly they are
On the coast of the sea, from the billows not far,

Where the forcible surgings, assailing the shore,
On the rough broken rocks spend their rage evermore.
In that hut lived a fisherman sturdy and old,
Who has counted his summers a score treble-fold,
And his winters as many, for winters come next
To the summers, uncalled for, unwished for, unask'd.
But though stooping with age and oppressed by hard toil,
He could brave the rough sea and the tempest's turmoil,
And for days on the crest of the billows be toss'd,
And for weeks in his pinnace alone be the host,
That no rocks and no shores and no land and no men
Would appear in his thought nor loom up in his ken,
But as still the wild winds with a fury would rise
A strange light, as of magic, would flash from his eyes,
And as still the great waves would be high with the blast
He would yet open sail, well securing his mast,
Hauling taut on the shrouds, that the forcible wind
Still might bear him as fast as a toy on whirlwind.

For he knew that at home were two children of his,
One a daughter, his life, and a son all his bliss,
That depend on his income and eat of his bread,
And for whom to provide he must work till he's dead,
For the one is so young and the one is so fair,
That she well might be called the sweet queen of the air.
And their mother, devoted and true to the last,
From the earthly abode into heaven has pass'd,
For some six years ago she was drowned in the sea
While attempting to save a wrecked party of three;
For she, too, was as brave as a woman can be
That was born and raised up on the turbulent sea.
Two sweet children have lived in the fisherman's hut
That was cozy and snug as the shell of a nut
For the worm that is in it, devouring the core,
And believing the world to be good evermore.
But these children nor knew of the world or its goods,
Nor of men with their variant, troublesome moods,
Nor of cities or towns, nor of empires and kings,
Nor of creatures, though human, with serpentine stings,
Nor of flatterers, liars, deceivers, and fools,
Nor of vipers and murderers, passion's weak tools,

For the one was so young and the one was so fair,
That she well might be called the sweet queen of the air.
Thus the first was the boy, but eight years to his age,
With marked features betraying his good lineage,
So robust and so healthy, a picture of life,
Well prepared for the future, the future's great strife;
And his face was angelic, his countenance mild,
And his brow was serene, was the brow of this child,
While the clusters and curls of a blond-golden hair
Overhung most profusely his head everywhere.
And his name we'll call Henry, the good name of old,
To which millions responded,—a legion untold;
But if you should dislike so prosaic a name,
Or complain that it is unromantic and tame,
I will point to the monarchs, and princes, and lords,
And to noblemen, gentlemen, dwellers of courts,
Both in England, Spain, Italy, Portugal, France,
All great warriors, fighters with shield and with lance;
Though prosaic their names, their great lives so decoy,

That this name might well suit for a fisherman's
boy.
But his sister, an angel, her Vesta we'll call,
So resembling the goddess, if semblance be all
In the features and form and the carriage and
mien,
Even then she a radiant goddess might seem.
But her nature was precious and constant and true,
And so kind and so mild as can be but a few,
And so innocent, guiltless, unknowing the false,
And so trusting, relying, obeying the calls
Of a pure noble heart that has tasted no gall,
Nor had known of the ways of a miserly thrall.
And her countenance shone like the face of the
sun,
So congenial, friendly, with smiles overrun,
With her lips like silk threads of a cardinal hue,
Like the roses her cheeks, and her eyes were deep
blue,
Of that depth of the heavens when, moonlit, the
night
Is relieved from its darkness by heavenly light.
And her chin wore a dimple,—a beautiful thing,
For which sons of rich men would give up every-
thing.
And her nose, in proportion, set well in its place,

That the whole seemed not less than a goddess's face.
While her auburn long tresses, now gold and now brown,
From her head in rich quantities loosely hung down,
That like some lovely nymph of the woods she appeared,
Or like one of those maids that in oceans are reared,
For of such we have read and of such we have heard,
And the presence of such we have often inferred.
For when rocking and tossing on mountain-like waves,
Or else wandering, lost, 'mid the dark sylvan caves,
A strange, wild fascination takes hold of our souls,
And a yearning, resistless, our senses infolds,
And we linger awhile, though endanger'd our lives,
And we stay yet a moment, which moment deprives
Us of valuable time that might be of great use,
For which all to account or to render excuse
We are forced to suppose that the mermaids and nymphs
So enchant or bewitch us whenever a glimpse

Of their haunts we obtain, that we'd follow them
far
To their bottomless dwellings wherever they are.
And it must be related how Vesta would oft
On her father attend; if the latter once coughed,
Or complained of a headache, a pain or a stitch,
She would make him a plaster of Burgundy
pitch,
A strong lotion for rubbing his sea-fretted limbs,
A good potion to drink,—a cup full to its brims
Of decoctions, infusions, and spirits and wine,
That might cure all the cough and procure sleep
divine,
Out of which the poor sufferer wakes with delight,
When his illness is gone and his spirits are light.
She would smoothen his brow and would dry his
wet hair,
And would wait on him, tend him, and give him
such care,
Both in health and in sickness, that oft he believed
He in Paradise rested, else greatly deceived.
But the boy was her charge, was her brother, the
child,
Whom "my boy" she had named, and "my pet"
she had styled;
Over whom with a sister's affection she watched,

Over whom with a mother's distraction she watched,—
For she was to him sister and mother in one;—
And with tender caresses she'd wake him at morn,
And with tender caresses she'd rock him at eve,
And, thus fondling him, oft to his bedside would cleave,
Sweetly smiling and cooing till both, in a deep
Quiet revery falling, are fallen asleep;
Of whom one was so young and the one was so fair,
That she well might be called the sweet queen of the air.

Canto II.

It was morning, and early the first sunny ray
Brightly danced on the face of the velvety bay,
That, surrounded by rocks, to the right was disposed
And that, fanned by the cool matin breezes, yet dozed
The sweet slumber of nature, and dreamed the soft dreams
Of inanimate things, while the shadows, it seems,
Were conversing inaudibly, whispering low,
And relating how nightly they glide to and fro;

A Candle-Light

While the shrubs and small trees that grew few and apart,
For 'mong rocks so they grow, were each wooing with art,
The voluptuous, flirting, and sensuous gale,
That with mists from the mountains descends in a veil,
All things kissing, embracing, enshrouding them all,
And refreshing the great ones, reviving the small.
To the left was the sea, the great, mighty expanse,
Over which was presiding, as far as our glance
Could detect, a soft solitude, calm absolute,—
Scarce a ripple was raised on the surface so smooth,
Scarce a splashing was heard at the base of the crags,
Scarcely blew the brisk wind, although seldom it lags,
But white vapors were rising most slowly and still,
In the air full expanding, ascending until
Both the sea and the sky are united in one,
Or 'twixt sky and the sea a fine webbing is spun
That excludes almost all of a ship from our view
Which lay anchor'd far off on the wavering blue,
By the distant horizon illusion which lent
It a charm, as if heaven and ocean have blent.

And the ship is named *Enterprise,* this ship of old,
Of which often the hold was intrusted with gold,
From the north frozen mines by great labor obtained,
Or with silver that years in the earth was contained,
Or with diamonds and pearls from the shores of Ceylón,
Or remains and antiques from remote Babylon,
And oft souls of frail men formed the cargo of weight
Which this good ship, though loth, ever led in good faith
To success and achievement, though fighting most brave
The rough tempests, men's souls, gold and silver to save!
Yet that morning this vessel there motionless stood,
With her sails tied to masts that were many a rood
To the sky, though her colors were flung to the gale,
With her helm quite a-weather, if ready to sail
But awaiting a favoring wind, while the sun
From behind her spread out like a fan, and begun
To shoot forth golden beams that were brilliantly bright,

And that, spreading throughout, were dispersing
the night.
On a rough rocky eminence beetling his top
Far above the calm surface, where thinly the crop
Is of daisies and pansies, the thyme and the rose,
And where thinly the *shrubage* despairingly grows,
A young child 'mid the shadows was running at
play
And fast chasing a butterfly, beautiful, gay,
And most brilliant in colors, which, seeing its
plight,
With its fluttering winglets now doubled its flight.
Oh poor, innocent butterfly, beautiful thing,
'Tis thy beauty that harms thee, and love is the
sting
Whereby oft thou art stung, whereby oft thou art
hurt,
Although far better treatment is thy true desert,
But our love is a poison, our kindness a bane,
Which afford less of pleasure than sorrow and pain.
And this child was none other than Henry our
boy,
On the top of the precipice skipping with joy
While on pleasure intent, nor was he there alone,
But nearby, 'neath a tree, on a moss-cover'd stone,
Sat his sister, his guardian, facing the sea,
Deeply thoughtful and lost in profound revery.

And beside her a sailor-lad motionless stood,
Also thoughtful and sunk in a sorrowful mood,
With her hand clasp'd in his, in his eyes a blank
stare,
And his features betraying some worry and care.
If we were simple rustics we'd come to the
front
Their acquaintance to make, not designed to af-
front,
Nor their peace to disturb, but just simply to ask
Them what ails them, what think they, what is
now their task.
But we, urbanized, polished, as ever we've been,
We would think this simplicity a social sin;
Nathless, wishing to know of them all we can
know,
We, of course, will betake us to bushes that grow
Close behind them,—as always polite people do,
Unobserved there observing and hearing these two.
This young sailor seemed slightly above
twenty years,
By a twelvemonth her senior, yet surely appears
More like one who in life as in prudence matured,
With his mind in sincerity firmly secured.
Of a manly appearance and strong, noble frame,
He commands admiration, respect, and that same
Well-disposed inclination which lastingly serves

For the honor of one who such honor deserves.
For being fair both in nature, in mind and in face,
What more, then, could he summon to claim from us grace?
Or what more, then, display than a masculine mind
With a feminine heart in one person combined?
But there standing near by the young maiden that sat
On the moss-cover'd stone, I must tell it, though flat,
That his masculine mind and his feminine heart
Were at war with each other, each wishing the part
Of supremacy, like some old neighboring feuds
'Twixt which Rivalry her awkward presence intrudes.
Then both bursting upon him with furious stress,
He seemed eager to speak, as you now almost guess,
Yet restrains, then attempts, and then, lifting his head,
With his hand pointing far, he thus nervously said:
"Yonder lies the good ship that must bear me away,
Quite away beyond regions where men never stray
Nor yet musingly linger, as often they do
When no danger awaits them, no tempests are due.

But our journey will be a tempestuous one,
And the seas will be rough 'neath the tropical sun;
And the seas will be rough 'neath the north frozen
moon,
And the streams will be high with the Asian
typhoon,
As from harbor to harbor we'll rapidly sail,
And no port of the world our strong vessel will
fail;
But ere I will return a full year will elapse,
And a year of one's life is a terrible lapse."
Here he finished, and Vesta, suppressing a
sigh,
Softly framed this consoling and tender reply:
"It is strange that thou, living for years on the
sea,
On that deep, throbbing heart, where thou ever
wilt be
For the love of its splendor, as oft thou hast told,
Yet, moreover, because it forever must hold
As so long it has held of thy parents the bones,
Whose sad death is bewailed by the wind's fleeting
moans;
Thou, who often the roughest of weather didst
brave
As the roughest of tempests, would once, meseems
save

Thee the trouble of sailing the sea. Yet behold!
O'er the ship the bright sun sheds his purple and
gold,
And smiles lavishly on the brave crew! then rejoice
And cheer up, for the omen is good, and a voice
Speaks encouragement from the great deep; from
above
God will watch thee, protect thee, and send thee
His love."
"If it seems strange to thee, it does not so
to me,
For which reason my words more explicit shall be.
Seest thou yonder black crow-with adventurous
wing
On the smooth surface flying a roundabout ring?
She would fain in the deep silent waters descend
For a fish or a crab, if she upward could wend;
But the fear of her losing the light in the air
Quite prevents her descending the ocean to dare.
I recoil not from sea nor from storm-breeding
gales,
Nor from hardship or toil that my station entails,
Nor demur I to leave there the rough, rocky
strand;
But the thought that my treasures remain on the
land,
All my riches, my glory, the jew'ls of my crown,—

That my soul's aspirations, my hopes are laid down
At the mercy of winds and caprice of the seas,—
That thought vexes and renders me so ill at ease."
A short pause now ensued, of the two neither spoke,
Till, impatiently growing, the silence he broke:
"And though suns may oft shine on the ship's noble masts,
It prevents not the coming of seafaring blasts;
And though Providence often may watch us on deck,
It not always prevents us becoming a wreck.
And a year is so long and one's life is so short,
That we sailors prefer oft remaining in port."
Vesta sighed now most certainly, ask me not why,
And a tear bright as dew she wiped quick from each eye;
Though I know not the reason, I heard not the cause,
But her answer now due will reveal, I suppose,
To our full satisfaction the motive thereof;
Thus she spake these sweet words like a whispering dove:
"Yet be patient, let nothing distract thy good mind;
When unshaken the Will it is easy to find

The Way leading to triumph and brilliant success;
Therefore let not vain fancies thy spirits oppress;
Nor mere fears thy brave heart with vain sorrows depress.
For such trifles oft broken have many a plan,
And have often wrought havoc with many a man,
While deceived was their purpose, their hopes all dissolved,
Life's endeavors unfinished, life problems unsolved."
"It is true what thou say'st," he with ardor exclaimed,
"And I'll heed the advice thou so kindly hast framed;
Yet but tell me one word, O, dear Vesta, do say,
Wilt thou think of me somewhat when I am away?
Also when, the year ending, I shall have returned,
Wilt thou be somewhat glad when thereof thou hast learned?"
Quite surprised by such query and taken aback,
Just that moment the proper reply did she lack,
And could simply say coldly, as say would the most:
"A strange question thou askest; the answer thou know'st."

The advantage her answer afforded was plain,
Which to grasp and make use of he would not refrain;
Hence he stooped close behind, o'er her shoulder then bent,
His right arm 'round her neck he most cautiously sent,
His left hand hers still pressing, though pressing more tight;
Should you think him too bold you were certainly right,
But perhaps we must blame now his feminine heart,
Or the fact that he soon for a year must depart,
But whatever the cause, it is certainly true
He pressed close as his theme he essayed to pursue.
"Since thou so much presumest," is what he replied,
"On my knowledge of thee, let me not be denied
That same privilege, by which, when granted it is,
My discourse may be guided, nor guided amiss.
"Canst recall it to mind, long ago, when of old
We were playmates about here, and pleasures untold
On us waited from morning till late in the eve,
And much-needed repose in the night did relieve

Our non-anxious minds? Though mere children, I hung
On thy path, thou as well at my side ever clung,
Each the other admiring and loving so well,
As of gnomes and of gnomides the stories they tell;
Nor our parents objected, but rather were glad
To behold our young hearts with young love running mad.
"I was reared for the sea and the life it demands,
And was trained by a brave sailor's strong tawny hands,
That me guided through dangerous passes of youth
As through dangerous passes of sea; they made smooth
All the rough ragged waves of the seafaring life,
And so fashioned my nature that it be not rife
With the failings and faults of a land-lubber's life.
For that sailor was none but my father and he
This unflagging, kind vigilance kept over me.
And my mother encouraged me in this good work,
And enjoined on me never my duties to shirk;
Yet demanded that often to home we return,
Which, when done, to satiety soon would I learn
Of the comforts and pleasures of home, and the bliss
Of a motherly blessing, a motherly kiss.

"Yet thou, Vesta, wert ever in mind as in sight,
And when once, on a terrible, storm-beaten night,
The black sea swallow'd them that I lovèd so well,
For me, too, seemed to sound the hoarse funeral bell,
And the grave stood wide gaping my corpse to receive,
And grim death was at hand me of life to relieve,
For naught else could I see than gross shadows and grim,
And fantastic appearances, cloudy and dim,
As if arms were raised beckoning up from the sea,
And their voices, though drowned, seemed yet calling for me,
That I thought I would follow them to the great deep,
The same fate to obtain, the same fortunes to reap;
Then I thought of thee, Vesta, as if in a dream
I could see thee in tears, and distress'd didst thou seem,
That I said to me, 'Hold! let no rashness occur;
For if not for thyself, thou must live still for her.' "
He moved forward to see the effect it produced,
And beheld her face bathing in tears thus induced

By the tale so pathetic; then, growing more bold,
On his knee by her side the remainder he told:
"Since then, Vesta, thou wert of my life the sole hope,
Of my days the sole light, that whenever I grope
In the dark underpasses of human affairs,
Full despairing, and burden'd with burdensome cares,
If it be in the East, if it be in the West,
On what sea or what country my soul feels depress'd,
But thy name I need mention, of thee I need think,
And distress and despair instantaneously sink
Into utter oblivion, past and forgot!
Thus thou lightest my life and mak'st lighter my lot.
"Nor reject now my pleadings, nor harden thy heart,
Oh, forbear, my dear Vesta, to give me the smart,
For—nay—yes, I must tell it; I come a great way
At thy angel-like feet my heart's contents to lay;
And believe me I love thee, ah yes, though a plain,
Common sailor, 'tis true, yes indeed, 'twas not sane
Thus to tell, but in Heaven they make it, they forge
It, and,——" Rising she here interrupted: "Oh, George!

Canst thou cherish the feelings I cherish for thee?"
"May the heavens attest to my word!" answer'd he.
Long they stood in each other's fair arms close embraced,
Neither utter'd a word; on each brow could be traced
Utmost happiness, such as true lovers can feel
That at last their long hidden affections reveal.
As when one in ecstatic emotion is lost
O'er a kinsman or friend, to make sure that his host
Is still present he clasps him more tight to his breast,
So now George, this young sailor-lad, frequently press'd
The fair Vesta against his emotional heart,
And as often caress'd her with tenderest art,
Yet distrusted his senses, believed not his eyes,
Not believing, and therefore demanded thuswise:
"Is it true, then, my angel, my darling, my joy,
Is it true that thou lov'st me, and couldst thou employ
Thy good heart and fair mind in a cause all my own,
Or have our sep'rate causes in one lately grown?"

"It is true, my dear friend, now the spark is applied,
And our hearts as our causes together are tied
By Love's strong, indissoluble bands. By that Light
After which my soul ever aspires, by that Might
All things ruling, by Heaven that spreadeth above,
I declare now my constant, unwavering love.
May the angels deign solemnize this with a song,
For I know, all things equal, it cannot be wrong."
And to this he retorted: "I swear by the sea
Which I love, and the stars which our guidance must be,
That my word is most true, my affection most pure,
Which the length of my life shall not fail to endure;
And whatever may chance and whatever may change,
These resolves in the future shall nothing derange.
"Lo! I look in thine eyes," he exclaimed as he paus'd,
"And behold in each one a vast sea! I feel lost
In their depth, I feel lost in their height, so immense

Their extent! like the shoreless and floorless expanse.
All serene are their surfaces, peace there abides!
Nor are surging their waves, nor are rising their tides;
And thy brow spreads above them as calm as the sky,
Fraught with deep meditations, exalted and high.
Be thou ever my loved one, my angel, my sprite,
So that thee I will worship and ever will dight
In rich garlands of roses and lilies and thyme,
And forever adore thee. And the length of time
That I must be away, in all parts of the earth,
On all streams, on all seas, either sorrow or mirth
Breed the soil, breed the clime, good or bad be my lot,
Still my thoughts as my mind shall be fixed to this spot."
"And so, too," she made answer, "wherever thou art,
In the cold, in the heat, thou bear'st with thee my heart,
And my eyes shall still follow thee, land in, land out,
With my blessings pursuing,—thereof be no doubt.
But, ah! must thou go forth? My heart is not at ease

When I think of thee braving the harassing seas."
"Be thou comforted! fear not my voyage at large,
I myself fear it not; though exacting my charge,
Still I prize such a life. One thing, love, will I pray;
When I am to return, a full year from this day,
Thou wilt place in thy lattice a taper whose light,
Like a star, will direct me in darkness of night.
And if winds or rough seas our good vessel delay,
Be thy heart not oppress'd nor assailed by dismay,
But just light in thy window the candle each night,
Till, arriving, I may in the night see its light."
"This be sure will I do, and remember, I pray,
Where the lattice permits the light's glimmering ray
To shine out on the sea, sits thy love there alone,
Disconcerted, dejected, dishearten'd and prone
To unpleasant distemper, until the year's close,
Thou returning, will bring to her cheerful repose."
"Be, my fair, of good cheer," he replied, "nor admit
To thy heart this chagrin or vexation unfit.
Let us hope and be patient, for patience and hope
In the end will of happiness broaden the scope.

But farewell now, my darling, my love, say
good-by!
Of the morning the veil is uplifted, and nigh
Comes the sun to the top of the masts on yon ship!
I must hasten my steps to start out on our trip."
A right friendly farewell she him bade, and
him blessed,
As becomes an occasion when friendship is pressed,
Till they finally deemed it was time to depart,
And he did, after many attempts, really start
On his way, going down a curved precipice, steep
And inclined, 'mong the cliffs in the canyon-like
deep
Of the mountains; still downward and downward
he went,
And his path seemed a winding and endless de-
scent
Through the thin sloping meadow, like some be-
witch'd shore
A charmed ocean encircling a thousand times o'er.
At last he is discern'd like a small tiny speck
At the foot of the mountain, approaching a neck
Of the sea that stretch'd out like a natural moat
Well protecting a fortress, then enter'd a boat
Him awaiting, immediately plying the oars,
When the mountains receded, receded the shores.

Far above stood his sweetheart down-looking at him
Disappearing far off in the shadowy, dim,
And deep distance, that seems without length, without end,
Without breadth, without measure, whereto all things tend
That are dubious, doubtful, and unascertained,
And where Chance, Fate, Illusion dwell self-entertained.
Soon this distance grew out of proportion and he,
Scarce discernible, came to the ship on the sea,
The ship we have named *Enterprise,* boarded her then,
And she, soon setting sail, went from sight of all men.
Vesta stood long in silence and ceased not to gaze
On the closing horizon where floated a haze
And closed over her George and the ship. A deep sob
Left her breast, well she knew, well she felt the heart's throb,
And upwell'd as a fountain the tears to her eyes,
Yet remained there and flowed not, as clouds in the skies
Keep the rain in suspense, any moment to fall.

"Far above stood his sweetheart down-looking at him disappearing far off."

At this instant came Henry and joyous did call
To her, having of sorrow or care not a thought:
"Sister, see what I have! a nice butterfly caught
In the bushes beyond; I will tear off its wings
And then try,——" "Heavens! don't, my good child; on these things
Have compassion, have mercy; how beautiful they;
Has it harmed thee? or hurt thee? or stung thee? do say!
Let it go, let it fly, make it free, it will thank
Thee so much,——" Nothing more could she say, but just sank
To the ground, her hands cover'd her face, her long hair
Flowed about, and her weeping was lost in the air.

Canto III.

A year now had elapsed, and fair Vesta is seen
In her chamber alone 'mid the dark sylvan scene
Of the evening's soft hour, when the tranquil decline
Of the sun emits faint mellow light on the line
Of the mountains; deep shadows with silence hold sway
On the landscape, the sea is engulfed in the spray

That is thinly spread over its blue, sleepy face;
'Tis the hour when the wandering Spirits embrace
Their good chance to appear on the earth once
again,
And the shades of the dead, reappearing, remain
Over night, till at morning they flee with affright;
Not a soul dares to stir or walk out in the night,
Or attempt to look into the darkness, but must
Ever pray to the Lord and in Him ever trust.
So thought Vesta while sitting alone in her room
Where a taper, erst lighted, dispersèd the gloom
From the only small window that faced on the sea,
While upon a small table was placed, as might be,
A vase full of grand flowers of elegant scent,
Roses, daffodils, pinks, lilacs, and peppermint,
Also sweet-smelling herbs of all kinds; while no
less
Was prepared a repast and warm drinks, I confess
To hot coffee and tea and the like, for the one
To arrive by the sea ere the coming of dawn.
Now the darkness descended and blacken'd the
sky,
And all things on the earth were as dark, while on
high
Were the stars all extinguished, the moon in a
cloud;

The waves rose in their height; the wind whistled
aloud.
And the night was most stormy, yet Vesta reck'd
not,
But walked quietly in her small chamber about,
Sitting down, then arising and looking outside,
Through the window or door which, now opening
wide,
She could see but the darkness and hear but the
roar
Of the wind and the wave beating loud on the
shore.
Robed in white silken gown neatly trimmed to the
waist,
A pink rose on her breast, the hair dressed in good
taste,
All of grace, all of beauty, she seemed not unlike
The fair Cynthia seeking, or waiting belike,
For her young mortal lover far down in the cave,
Never ceasing him making immortal to crave.
Slowly went the slow hours of the night, slowly
tolled
The bell-buoy on the sea, ever slower there rolled
The slim hands on the clock, pointing now toward
one,
Then at two, and at three, but it never had done
Before this two short hours into more than a day;

But yet would it reach four without further delay?
Shall it point farther still, or forever here stay?
In her chair she at last fell asleep; yet the morn
Lacked an hour to his birth, but the fury and scorn
Of the winds now subsided and hoarse grew the sea,
Calm returned, peace descended, and Dawn with a glee
Fled from east toward west with alarming great speed,
And spread over the land. Russet Morning now freed
From his nocturnal lair hasten'd fast toward noon;
The sun rose, the birds sang, the leaves rustled, and soon
The midday in full splendor from heaven arrived,
When a raven, belated, athwart the house dived
Through the air, loudly croaking,—bad omen, no doubt,
Which now Vesta aroused, and she glanced all about,
Then walked out of the house to find him whom she sought,
But no trace could she find, and no tidings were brought.
Many days did she spend in this vigilant watch,

All awake in the night, in the day walking much
On the shores of the sea, on the heights of the land,
On the tall rocky hills that were ranged on each hand.
Long and tedious weeks passed away, and three months
Now expired, yet fair Vesta, expectant, not once
Ceased to watch and to hope and to kindle the light;
But he came not by day and he came not by night.
The bleak month of November arrived, when the storms
Assume menacing aspects and terrible forms.
Yet she feared not nor heeded the storm nor the cold,
But one drear afternoon, when a horror untold
Swept the face of the land, she walked out to the cliffs,
Thence to see if among the yachts, frigates, and skiffs,
That come from the horizon there comes not that Ship
Of proud crest and bold sails, homeward from the long trip,
On whose deck is her sailor, her darling, her boy;
Him to meet with stretch'd arms and a heart full of joy,

A Candle-Light

With a smile and a blessing, yet chiding withal
For delaying so long and neglecting to call.
In a plain snowy-white silken gown was she dressed,
With two white and pink roses adorning her breast;
But the wind blew the roses in fragments away,
And inflated her gown like a sail on the bay,
And undid her long hair, and blew harsh in her face,
If to tell her how hopeless and sad is her case.
Then she knelt on the turf and prayed, weeping, to God,
And her tears gushing forth hotly fell on the sod,
While the clouds from above slowly dropped their own store,
And the wind moaned and wailed louder yet than before.
Yellow leaves from the trees fell in heaps on the drift,
The sky loured, the clouds heaved, and the ocean did lift
His wild clamoring tongues to the mountains, whence Jove
Freed his thunder and lightning at pleasure to rove
In this desolate chaos of nature pervers'd;

"Then she knelt on the turf and prayed, weeping, to God."

A black squall rose anon, and the rocks seemed to burst
With the blast that was beating against every side,
And the scene was most terrible. Vesta then cried:
"Oh, all-merciful Lord, save my love on the sea!"
And the echo remurmur'd, "my love on the sea."
She arose and went swift to the house, for the rain
Came in torrents, and Henry alone did remain,
Doubtless fearing the storm; now she open'd the door
And thus heard the child pray as he knelt on the floor:
"God of Heaven, oh, save our good father at sea,"
And she thought how unlike her own prayer prayed he.
Him she clasped in her arms and sank down in a seat,
And him bathed in kisses and tears, as was meet,
While the squall and the tempest augmented in force,
The loud thunders and lightnings pursuing their course,
And the rain seemed to fall without any remorse.

Six months more sped away and our maiden grew sad
And dishearten'd and pale, now in gray dresses clad
And demurring aspèct, often sighed she and wept,
Never fully she woke, never fully she slept;
While Neglect took possession of all in the hut,
Settling firmly therein, and Discomfort did shut
The door over all pleasanter things; she as well
Was much changed, very listless and cast in a spell
Of unceasing dejection and gloom unrelieved,
While her father no more her attention received;
Now his meal she forgot, now his bed overlooked,
And her brother, her child, even, also was booked
For the same; and their home was most dull and uncheer'd,
All because her young sailor had yet not appeared.
On a Sunday her father was home; as he sat,
His boots oiling, he glanced at his girl standing at
The small window that looked on the sea, and his eyes
Became dim and obscured, her observing thuswise,
Then he said: "My dear daughter, of late I took note
Thy demeanor so changed and thy nature so smote
With unusual sadness. Disclose to me, then,

What oppresses thy spirits, whence comes it and
when?"
"It is nothing, dear father; this sadness you see
By the dull dreary weather is brought upon me."
"Say not so, my good lass. This gray head
is too old
Not to know of some things which in words are not
told.
Whilom thou wert so happy and bright as a fay,
Singing, dancing, rejoicing the length of each day,
Now art downcast, if galled, and bear'st ever thine
eye
On the ocean's broad face, as if thence to descry
Of thy Saviour the advent, while here every night,
If to search Him or guide Him, thou keepest a
light.
Tell thy father, my girl, after what dost thou seek?
Mayhap he can assist thee; delay not, but speak."
Then she turned and walked up to him, fell
on her knees,
And besought thus: "Oh, father, I am not at ease,
Yet forgive me, I pray, for not telling ere now,
But if ever thy blessing I needed, I vow,
Oh, dear father, I need it most now." This she
said,
But could say nothing more, and she burrowed her
head

In his lap and wept bitterly, bitterly sobbed,
And her heart seemed abreaking, so strongly it throbbed.
"God be with thee, my lassie," he comforted her
As he placed his brown hand on her head, "naught deter
Thee from telling thy father thy plight." So he bade,
And she told him of George and the vow he had made,
And the pledge she him gave, and their mutual consent,
And their love for each other, and each one's intent
To remain true forever, forever most true;
His departure and promised return overdue;
The real cause of the candle-light did she explain,
And the cause of her sorrow and sadness made plain.
Then her father consoled her as well as he could,
And the seaman's vicissitudes made understood,
And related long stories of fate and of chance,
And of luck and adventure and sailors' romance,
How at last all goes happy, as this case will be;
He remember'd George well, a good laddie was he,
And he meant to give Vesta to him as a bride,
Yet she need not despair, but in hope still abide;
He himself will go scouting the seas and perhaps
Will yet meet him ere many a day will elapse.

So it was, and the fisherman sailed many days,
Many months did he sail on the rivers and bays,
On the sea and the ocean in quest of the one
Who long since from the sight of all men has been gone.
Of all sailors he met, of all vessels he saw
He demanded some clew, and attempted to draw
Information concerning the ship *Enterprise,*
And they gave him some tidings of her 'neath the skies,
In the northern cold waters above Labrador,
Past the straits and the islands, the haven and shore,
Down the mighty Atlantic, 'round Cape of Farewell,
North to Iceland, there stopping some cargo to sell;
And another declared that he saw her come thence
Past the islands of Britain and harbors of France,
Then at Lisbon put in for repairs. Others yet
Saw her passing the Strait of Gibraltar and set
Out for Malta, there passengers taking, and sail
Toward Smyrna and Cyprus with baggage and mail;
Through the Isthmus she passed, so a captain declared,

'Twixt the continents sailing, the tempest her spared,
Though the tempest was great; then at Bombay she stopped,
Sailed the coast of wild Africa, anchor then dropped,
As some told, at the Cape of Good Hope; later on
She was spied at the mouth of the great Amazon;
And one saw her at Rio Janeiro, a third
Saw her making Cape Horn; the Pacific was stirred
By her powerful crest; she was 'whelmed in a squall
On the waters misnamed, but escaped safe withal,
Then was heard of at Feejee, was heard of again
'Mong the islands more north, but was never since then
Either heard of or seen by the seafaring men.

In this way ten long years have been spent, and one eve,
When the darkness to nature an aspect did give
Of unqualified mourning and sombre distress,
Our old fisherman, clad in the fisherman's dress,
On his sloop lying stretch'd, with his face to the sky,

"And then drifted to right on the bay,
Where his children discovered him dead the next day."

His hands crossed on the chest, slowly came sailing by
The curved shore, and then drifted to right on the bay,
Where his children discover'd him dead the next day.
He was buried near by the lone hut; there alone
Was he laid, with no monument or sculptured stone
To mark out his cold grave, yet the grass-cover'd mound
On the hill was by Vesta most easily found
Where she daily brought flowers, the fresh-smelling growth
That the valley would yield, and she often was loth
To depart, but for hours there alone so she wept
That her tears well could penetrate to the grave's depth.
To the same occupation took Henry, now grown
To be twenty; equipped for his trade, he did own
All utensils, his father's at first, a good boat,
Many nets, a strong sloop, and more such that can float
Both by sail and by oar, over deep, over shoal,
With great speed, yet amenable to his control.

Other fishermen meanwhile arrived on the spot
And made settlements, yet thereby Henry lost not,
For enough were the fish and full wide was the sea
To permit of the trade more extensive to be.
They made settlements there and a village did build
Which they Bleakville have named; soon its harbor was filled
With tugs, schooners, and vessels of many a kind,
And the steam-cars were running thereto. As we find
In such cases, the village grew up to a town,
While its commerce increased every year. As the crown
Of their glory was Vesta esteemed by each soul,
And their pride, too, she was, for she played a chief rôle
In the town; taught the children at school, helped the poor,
Sang in church, kept the post-office, made a detour
Now and then 'mong the people their mites to collect
For sick sailors and seamen who suffer'd neglect.
Still she lost not her charms and her beauty yet had,
Wherefore many a villager nearly ran mad
With the love for her; many an one paid his suit

Wooed and lost, while she told each one that her
pursuit
Is "to hope and be patient, for patience and hope
In the end will of happiness broaden the scope."
And one day a rich broker, concluding some
deals
For a car-load of whales and a car-load of seals,
From the city arriving, thought what precious
thing
To the city a token from here could he bring.
He was shown many opals and rubies and gems,
Many diamonds and pearls set in gold diadems,
But these are not the best of all gifts; so he
thought
As he strolled on the street; then appeared, though
unsought,
A strange vision before him; a goddess of light
In the street stood full radiant,—glorious sight,
Bending over a child that lay hurt on the walk
And that, sickly and pale, was scarce able to talk.
If this goddess has wings they are closely con-
cealed
By her dress, but her vestments and visage revealed
Her true nature, a heavenly form! gifted so
With rare beauty and heaven's own attributes. Lo!
She stoops over and picks the child up with a kiss;
Bears it tenderly on to such place where there is

Good provision and succor for cases like this.
Then he follow'd her footsteps and follow'd them close,—
As if drawn by invisible powers he goes,
And then enter'd the house where the goddess delayed,
But soon found that this goddess is a mortal maid,
And none other than Vesta; so charmed was he then
That he thought a fair angel dwelt here among men.
Far below fall the opals, gems, diamonds, and pearls,
Here sweet Heaven itself to his senses unfurls;
What more rare or more precious a thing could he take
Than so lovely a bride as she truly would make?
He accordingly told her his heart's burning flame,
His unlimited wealth and illustrious name;
He would make her as happy and rich as a queen,
And would furnish a palace the best ever seen
Of fine marble and granite, with gardens around,
Where will riches and luxuries ever be found,
And attendants and servants and maids will abound.
She herself will go dressed in the costliest silk,
By rich jewels adorned, pearls as white as pure milk,

And large diamonds and rubies imbedded in gold,
Trimmed with fabrics that by Orientals are sold.
She will live a most happy and fortunate life,
If she only would say that she would be his wife.
Himself young and quite handsome he might well
expect
Her reply in the positive, in which respect
He found he was mistaken, for, thanking him
much,
She refused him and added with exquisite touch:
"I must put in my lattice a taper each night,
Till, arriving, he may in the night see its light."

Of all things we regret in the passing of years
Are the years themselves, passing if oceans of tears
And unnumber'd raised hands, all imploring their
stay,
Are unworthy a cause for their steps to delay.
At the threshold of life ourselves once do we find
Then all passes like some panorama, and blind
Is the eye that discerns not the flight, and the ear,
Too, is deaf that the passing of life cannot hear.
We entreat yet a moment, implore yet an hour,
We beg prostrate before the eternal great Pow'r
That our time be extended, however though short;
We have learned our hard lessons, our battles we
fought,

And will profit now by them and wisely live well,
If some years but be granted wherein we might tell
Our experience to others; but no, 'tis too late!
Soon our end is decreed by implacable Fate,
Which consigns us to that from which first we were made.
Vesta found her years fleeting as swift as a sail
On the wind,—she her fiftieth birthday could hail;
But, more sad to relate, as fast flitted her charms,
And her beauty now waned. That first sign which alarms
Genteel people, that silvery turn of the hair,
Lighted on her fair head, and she now was aware
That old age is advancing, advancing too fast,
And her future will soon be a thing of the past.
Her face wrinkled, cheeks sunk, and the eyes became dim,
Her hands brown, and her form became stooping and slim;
All joy vanished, the thrill of her heavenly voice
Died away; for no pleasure or cheer had she choice
Or desire, but despaired of all hope, yet hoped on,
Perhaps fate will decree that George finally may come;
So she placed yet each night in her window the light,
But he came not by day and he came not by night.

Decades two made the mark; an old woman
we find
In a fisherman's hut all alone, almost blind
From much weeping, gray, weary, emaciate, weak,
And forlorn, doubled up, almost crouching, a freak
Of some sort she appears; quite rheumatic and
lame,
She keeps much to her bed; health on her has no
claim,
Nor yet seems to have had for some years. Now
her part
Is completed, her duties are done, though her heart
Is oppressed with severe disappointment and grief;
Her mind suffers all torments and finds no relief.
She walks out in the nightfall, unable to sleep,
And, unable to rest, all day long does she weep;
Her misfortunes were great and her pleasures were
slight,
And her life seemed a watchful, continuous night.
Unrequited her patience, her kindness unpaid;
Unrewarded her labors, her fortunes unmade.
Now forgotten and lost by the ones she once help'd,
And neglected by all, in deep silence she felt
The cold cruelty gnawing her heart. In the street
Were the gamins pursuing her, as with bare feet
And in tatters she walked; they would snatch out
her crutch

And assail her, and mockingly tease her, as such
Village urchins can do. And they named her the
witch,
Or the sorceress, famed in her art to be rich;
Well instructed in magic and learned in its rules,
As beseems the arch-queen of the paupers and
fools.
It was rumored in town that she often consorts
With the demons of night, and that nightly she
sports,
Turning young at her will, with the rest of her
train,
As they dance 'round their caldrons again and
again.
She was heard by one talking when no one was
near,
And in forests conversed, as if forests could hear;
And one saw that she fed once a hare, once a bird,
Doubtless that was the devil transformed; she was
heard
Shrieking forth incantations; and oft in the dark
Has been seen from the shore a small boat to em-
bark.
While her house, why, 'tis known even to every
child,
Is possessed by the demons; there orgies most wild

Of the ghosts and the spirits take place, there they meet
In assemblage, hold council, and each other greet;
For proof, go to the house any time of the night,
And you'll see in the window is burning a light.
So lived on our poor Vesta that once was so fair,
And that once could be thought a sweet queen of the air.
Thus she suffer'd while living, but suffer'd not long,
For a year or two later her illness a strong
And firm hold on her took; there she lay to arise
Nevermore, yet for months linger'd on in this wise.
Then at last, her hour knowing, she called Henry up
To her bedside and said: "Dear brother, the drop
Of life's essence is ebbing away, and my soul
Must depart. Who knows whither? Who knows of its goal?
I have suffer'd in patience, in hope did I live,
And will die now in peace if thy promise wilt give
Still to keep in my lattice a taper each night,
That, in case he arrives, he may yet see the light."
And, by Henry assured, she turned once in her bed,
Then collapsed all exhausted and silent and dead.

Abused by the World

A FLOWER sweet, with colors bright,
Shining at day as well as night,
Its fragrance transcends mountain-height,
  Is so much abused by the world.

Its virtues are for common good,
To some it is a kind of food,
Yet it is treated cruel and rude;
  Oh! how abused by the world!

It enlightens the thoughtful few,—
Empowers their bodies anew,
'Twill reach a climax in time due;
  But oh! how abused by the world!

Bees, dragons, reptiles, what a heave!
Its friends and foes, they ask no leave;
Taking all, but have naught to give,—
  Oh! what an abuse by the world!

I weep for thee, thou precious gift,
Thou that can high the world uplift,
I weep that thou art in this drift
  Of dreadful abuse by the world.

Courage! courage! flow'ret sweet,
In the near future thou wilt lead,
Everywhere thy goodness wilt breed,
  When there'll be no abuse by the world.

New Haven, December, 1895.

Facetious Snowflakes

HAPPY seem the snowflakes
As they dance in the air!
Skipping and slipping,—but descending,
They with pure whiteness cover the lair.
They tumble and leap while
Buoy'd by the gentle breeze,
And sliding and gliding,—but falling,
They crown with whitecaps the leafless trees.
Skipping and sliding,
Slipping and gliding,
Verily flying with joyance fair!
Bouncing and falling,
Leaping and crawling,
Speak, O ye snowflakes, know ye no care?

They spake not and said naught,
But just fell to the ground,
Shifting, and drifting, and roving, as
They mournfully glid from mount to mound.
And Earth, Men, Horses, Trees,
And all things else of note,

Became enrobed in purity white,
As the little snowflakes downward smote.
Shifting and drifting,
Roving and falling,
Faithfully spreading Truthfulness pure!
Whitish bedecking
All Earthly speckling,—
Is it of use! Say, are ye quite sure?

They spake not and said naught,
But just fell to the ground,
Shifting, and drifting, and roving, as
They mournfully glid from mount to mound.

New Haven, February 20, 1897.

To My Niece

My dearest child, though young in years,
In limbs not strong, in features delicate,
Your brow bespeaks the intellect of peers,
Your gleaming eyes show wisdom intricate;
While kindness, love, and virtues infinite
Do rest upon thy comely little face,
Imparting to it everlasting grace.

And when the gloomy hours of weary days
Steal in upon me like a winter night,
Approaching gently, in your cunning ways,
You stand inquiring; pleading at my side:
You ask me why I'm silent, why I sighed,
You wonder at my sad, despairing mood,
And say you'd help me if you only could.

You climb my knee, though not through my behest,
And say no more but, in a quiet way,
You rest your head upon my heaving breast,
And thus perceive the heart that under lay:
Its violent throbbing and its dreadful sway
Disturb your peace,—as if you felt the smart,
But nay, you feel it not, you know it not.

You cease your childish questions of the sun,
  The moon, the stars, fire, water, and the like,
And lovingly, as oft before you've done,
  You steal your little arms around my neck:
  And this position did I prize and reck
When absorbed I sat in thoughts both grave and
      deep,
And you immersed in sweetest, quiet sleep.

New Haven, July, 1897.

Seclusion

Musingly sat I alone in my room,
No one disturbing the prevalent gloom.
The streets are so quiet, abandoned by all,—
Vacant, like Rameses after its fall.
Some neighbors are sleeping and some out of town,
Others betook them to witness a clown,
Who, mornings and evenings, in rain or in shine,
Is ever disposed to produce Art divine,
If only a shilling, a penny or two,
He gets from each visitor,—claiming it due.
Cajoling the people he blinded their eyes,
And fooled them and tricked them through magic device,
And made for them rabbits and birds and some swine,
And all things that properly come in his line;
All of them living and breathing the air,—
All of them beautiful, polished, and fair.
The people stand gaping,—the fools that they are!
They see him not taking them out of a jar.

The clown disappears and one else takes his
place,
One with a kindlier, happier face.
Dressed quite in fashion, he's all in a glee,—
For higher the person the greater his fee.
He talked to them politics, business, and trade,
And told them how fortune and money is made.
"Fortune just knocks," says he, "once at each door,
Take her then, else you will see her no more."
And with this most sensible, finishing clause,
He left amid hearty and cheerful applause.
Others then came to deliver their parts,—
All with emotional, big, and kind hearts.
Whatever they said and whatever they did
Had better be left as though under a lid;
Only to look at, to frown or to smile,
At so much detestable, genuine guile.
Sitting alone in my room, quite alone,
I hear from afar that the trumpets are blown.
People are shouting and children cry loud,
Horses are neighing, and all are as proud
As were the Egyptians when, back from her march,
Was Isis within her celestial barge;—
After she traveled for many a mile,
Across the Nyanza and down the great Nile,
In search of Osiris, who, nailed in a box,
Lay hid in the waters or under the rocks.

But why this excitement, this foolish affray?
Ah, I forget 'tis electioning day.
And mingled with shouts of joy come from below
Echoes so strange, and still stranger they grow
As I listen intentively; hark ye and hear!
You do not distinguish these murmurs, I fear.
Come they from out of the Earth's entrails deep?
Are they the rumblings an earthquake may reap?
Or are they the groans from the suffering mass
Who, ghost-like, before us do constantly pass?
Louder and louder these echoes become,
Till mountains and meadows resound with the hum.
The rocks and the forests are shook by the blast
That comes from the east and the north and the west.
And up from the south there come currents of air,—
Thund'ring they come as a message they bear
To all of the people on earth to be found,
To masters and servants, to freed and the bound;
To destitute mothers and fortuneless babes,
To toilers who always, like fluctuant waves,
Ceaselessly labor and patiently wait:
To all who may love and to all who may hate
To hear of this message,—it comes all the same,

And brings with it warnings that have as their aim
To guide and instruct in a happier life,
Where needless our struggle and merciless strife!
"Take heed!" cried this message as onward it sped,
"Take heed, for your bodies on weakness are fed;
Your conscience is drenching in guilt and in crime;
Your feet do not tread but in sleet and in slime.
You cheat and you kill, and you lie and you rob,
And yet wish to wear Truth's purity garb!
Beware, O ye men, lest on some future day
You'll witness your works with the deepest dismay.
Possessed will you then be by sorrow and grief,
But naught will avail nor afford you relief."
Thus thunder'd the warning which bounded through space,—
Exhorting, advising the whole human race.
And fleeting still faster, it doubled its speed,
While loud rang the echo: "Take heed, oh, take heed!"
But the people, they heed not this warning, forsooth!
They hear not the prophet foretelling the truth.
The people, these people! they're out on the streets

To choose for them masters, to vote for their chiefs;
To see the great Jugglers, the Clowns and the Fools,
And join in their gamings and play with their tools.
Secluded, I find me alone at my hearth,
And, being alone, I can best see the mart
Where men are in dealing with flesh and with blood,
And barter their honor for dirt and for mud.
Secluded, I hear well the rumblings through space,—
Methinks that the Judgment has come for this race.

New Haven, August, 1897.

In Despair

When all the hopes have left me,—
  When none remained behind
To cheer me in my sorrow
  And soothe my troubled mind;
When all the floral beauties
  Imagination gave
Have vanquish'd, like beloved ones
  Within a dismal grave:
When all that was is over,
  And mirth and joy depart,
'Twas then my head was drooping
  And heavy was my heart.

'Twas then, in time of trouble,
  When all things changed to worse,—
So treated harsh by fortune
  That Hunger was my nurse;
My friends have then deserted,
  And left me quite alone
To battle in the tempest
  And fight the dragon-drone:

A Candle-Light

Heavy indeed it weighted
  Upon my weary form,
Yet none there were to sympathize
  Or help me in the storm!

The day has passed and faded,
  And darkest night encroached,
While, stealthily and serpent-like,
  Despair had then approached;
Without a hope for the future,
  No light to show the way,
No staff to lead or guide me
  But that would lead astray:
I sat thus brooding, thinking,
  And endless grew my thoughts!—
Despairing, thinking, brooding,
  Till drowned in Sorrow's draughts.

New Haven, October 14, 1897.

Where is the Word

Oh! if but one word would stand for all
The grief and troubles of my soul,
How terse, how sharp the word would be!
And full expressing misery.

If but one word would stand for all
The grief and troubles of my soul,
How great, how vast that word would be!
Of depth no less than deepest sea.

Ah, the grief and troubles of my soul,
Which seem not ended therewithal!
For from my loved ones tidings come
Of sad mishaps and broken home.

Such sad mishaps, oh! sad indeed
When helpless people are in need,
And grim disease their hearts doth bleed,
While death in fate's decrees they read.

A Candle-Light

Avaunt, thou cruel, frightful thing!
Avaunt, O Death, thou mortal sting!
They are yet young, they must still live,
They must yet life their children give.

Oh! if but one word would stand for all
The grief and troubles of my soul,
'Twould save me writing all this down,
And spare perchance a groan or frown.

But not a single word, nor thought,
Can stand for all these things have wrought
Within my soul,—my heart and mind;—
There are no words of such a kind!

New Britain, December 11, 1897.

Can It Be

Oh, dear me,
How can it be
That mortals like we
Be happy and free?

Oh, can it be,—
Mortals like we
Be happy and free,
Like gods of the lee?

But, were we
Happy and free,
Then all men would see
A good destiny.

Happy and free
All men must be;
Then part with the fee
That's called for, with glee.

Part wi' the fee,—
Span the wide sea,
Then all men will be
Most happy and free.

New Britain, December 21, 1897.

Some Thoughts on a December Day

I.

It is a dreary day, so all confess,
And all dejected feel and sorely sad,—
Because such dismal days as this depress
All spirits, if divine or human clad.

An autumn day it is, and all things here
Attest to it, as speechless things can do;—
The winds, the mists, the rain, the weather drear,
The dark gray billows moving to and fro.

II.

So dismal, naked, lonely stand the trees,
Upright, yet bending low before the gale;
Below are thickly strewed their once-green leaves,
Now flying in the air like bouncing hail.

The little saplings, bending to the ground,
Obeisance pay to wild destructive force.
The little shrubs and bushes on the mound
Are much disturbed, as if by some remorse.

And low and lower come the thick black clouds,
  Enveloping the Earth in fleecy folds,
Till all seems wrapt in mourning shrouds,
  Yea, all,—from greatest rocks to smallest molds,

From deepest valleys to the mountain-tops,
  From sea to land, from land to meadows vast;
While flowers, herbs, and many growing crops,
  Uprooted, flee before the gallant blast.

So fiercely blows the howling, savage wind,
  As to uproot the earth was its design,
Or with destruction great the heavens rend,
  And bring about at last the world's decline.

III.

While through the streets or on the road you seem
  To move within a medium dense and gray;
Your vision dimmed, scarce lighted by a beam
  From hidden light, yet know that this is day.

And know this be an autumn day, the worst
  Of any days that autumn offers up;
A gift to man to make him feel he's cursed,
  And make him taste from Nature's bitter cup:

To make him feel what melancholy is,
How well morose and dreariness compare,
And make him long for what he could not miss,
And make him wish for death's abhorrent
snare;—

For this is not the autumn of the year
Alone, but also of the Human Life,—
A season which is filled with hate and fear
Arising from that endless, bitter strife.

An endless, bitter strife, for such it is,—
A long, continuous, unbecoming war,
Where one's misfortune makes another's bliss,
And one man's wine is but another's gore.

This double autumn makes it doubly sad,
And casts a gloom around us far and wide,
Which, like a shadow flapping overhead,
Comes and goes, even as the moving tide.

IV.

The rain, admixed with snow, falls languidly,
If loath to spread itself on muddy soil,
The housetops, walks, and streets appear to be
Belabored well by Nature's ceaseless toil.

Some dirty pools lie stagnant in the street,
And hollows, nooks, and crags with mud are filled;
The pavements are bedecked with odious sleet,
As if the Titans here their venom spilled.

I sit and look upon this dreary scene,
While gazing through bedewed and sweating panes,
And feelings in me rise no more serene
Nor less disturbed, though no disorder reigns.

Disorder, discord, in my breast is not,
Yet otherwise the contrast striking seems:—
Without, the tempest wages battles hot;
Within, the heart doth flutter as it deems

To overcome its pains by violent means:
Outside, accumulated fogs and mists
Exclude the sun with all his shining beams;
Within is hope shut out and gloom exists.

v.

My room is dark and cold and desolate,
And in the fireplace the wood is burned;—
The fire out, the ashes cold remained,—
The walls are moist, as if to weep they've learned.

A Candle-Light

A chill so thrilling cold creeps over me,
And freezes all my blood, my heart congeals,
Nor yet takes leave until my memory
Is well impressed with aught that it reveals.

For this is not a chill of simple mold,
But from the human flock does it arise,
And strikes some gentle folk as well as bold,
And claims some noblest men as its due prize.

Yea, mankind thus affords its gratitude
To many men who live and toil for them;
Neglecting if they do not persecute,
Forgetting if they do not torture them.

I need not mention here what happed to those
Who suffered thus, or reached an early grave;
Too dark the deeds! too hideous to disclose
The hundred-handed monster in his cave.

VI.

Some strange, vague feelings in my heart abide
And cruelly play about its tender nerves,
Yet mock its groans, and wantonly deride
Its plaintive tones as it in anguish stirs.

The strangest feelings! the which to explain
I need for language seek or likeness find,
Yet to unravel them I must abstain,
For that would but disclose my inmost mind.

Conflicting feelings, which thus seem to say:
"Thou art despised, yet must thou love the more;
They sneer at thee in this December day,
Yet must thou love them even as before.

"When all the world their backs have turned on thee,
And torture, hoot, or jeer thee as they may,
Oh, treat them fully to your sympathy,
And think that this is their December Day."

While others rise and murmur silently:
"We rather pity them, but love them not;
Acquiescence oppose we strenuously,
Nor do we court the martyr's bitter lot."

VII.

Thus ever and anon these opposite
And diverse feelings of my inmost heart,
Dispute between them problems intricate
And wish to solve for me that very part

Which I myself for years have tried to solve.
  Hark! listen to the sounds confused without,
As if some avalanche that, in dissolve,*
  Among the Alps with mirth doth play about;

Or rather if a milliard swarms of bees
  Are humming greatly over flowers sweet;
Or many thousand crows among the trees
  Are fighting fiercely over carrion meat;

Nay, worse, as if ten thousand vultures strong,
  A carcass seeing by some weeds unfurled,
Are screaming wildly as they downward throng:—
  Such is the clamor of our noisy world.

This noisy, busy world, incessant thing!
  No rest, no peace, no happiness, no joy,
No blessings which prosperity can bring,
  Nor any short *reprievement*† to enjoy.

The busy world,—well, she concerns me not,
  E'en as with me herself does not concern;
I'd rather be unnoticed and forgot
  Than aught of grief and trouble more to learn.

---

* *I.e.*, in the act of dissolving; being dissolved.

† For reprieve.

Unnoticed and forgot indeed I am,
By friends deserted, if friends I e'er had;—
No cheering voice, no living, feeling gem
To luminate the gloom and pleasure add.

No living soul to bring its soothing balm,
And quell the turbulence within my breast;
No gentle wind the raving waves to calm,
And bring some comfort to a ship distressed.

VIII.

Alone thus in my chamber cold and dark,
Depressed, discouraged, and in full dismay,
Though quite resigned to Fate's deciding mark,
I spend my hours of this December day.

Farewell, ye visions of my mind, farewell!
Adieu, ye images of youth and hope,
The years are flying fast, the ages swell,
We both are now on a digressing slope!

Too soon, alas! too soon our goal is reached,
And now at last we have our parting ways,
Too soon is hope and happiness impeached,—*
Yet, one more kiss, another fond embrace

* *I.e.*, hindered.

A Candle-Light

Before our course in life is finally sealed.
The fact is firm,—the one we so abhor,
For Fate has never yet her laws repealed;
Immutably they stand and e'er endure!

"Immutably they stand," the echo rings,
And all the elements can prove it so.
The wasted lands, the floods, the dried-up springs,
The deserts wild to Fate their state do owe.

Forever they endure,—the laws of Fate,
Since rocks and seas, in time, their places change,
For where the surging billows rolled of late
Now towers in the air a mountain range.

Great Empires, States, and Kingdoms live, then die,
And Nations rise and fall as Time turns.
Ninéveh, Memphis, Carthage buried lie
Beneath a vast and shapeless mass of ruins;*

Alike the peoples which there lived and thrived,—
Assyrians, Egyptians, and Carthag'ans,—
Though each for immorality have strived,
In oblivion went down with all their plans.

* Of Carthage not even the ruins remain, and its site is a factor of dispute.

Thus in the valley of Oblivion
All things are doomed at last to meet and stay,
And ever sleep, as did Endymion
In Latmian cave, nor wake to light of day.

And dynasties, kings, monarchs, all are hurled
Adown the sloping precipice of Time,
Forgetting now their aims, their strifes,—the world,
Its riches, grandeur, and its rôle sublime.

So heavenly bodies, suns, moons, and stars,
Alike ourselves to changes are consigned;
Throughout the Fates ride their chariot cars,
And deal with things the way they feel inclined.

IX.

Beside these things sublime and endless great
Myself when vied,* I think, "What am I then?"
And when I notice still their changing state,
Their glory, then their dark decline; and when

I hear of Nations great and powerful
That once held sway, but now forever gone,
Their cities, shrines, and temples wonderful,
Dispersed, as mist before the light of morn;

*I.e., compared.

A Candle-Light

And when I see that Nature's monuments
  Crumble away and shift from place to place,
Resigned, I bow my head in reverence,
  And wait to follow in that shady trace

Which leads all men to their eternal rest;—
  There in the deep to lie and change to clay
And pass to better state, and then to best,
  To think no more of this December day.

New Britain, January 20, 1898.

Shades of Darkness, Why Delay

A SONG.

Shades of darkness, why delay?
Come and bear me far away.
Bear me far across the seas;
Over mountains, valleys, trees;
Over cities' tow'ring spires;
Over floods and over fires;
Over mean and harmful things,
Bear me lightly on your wings.
Bear me to that land sublime;
To that place where dwells no crime;
To the shores where joy is life;
To the halls where bliss is rife;
To that place, O wingèd steed,
Bear me quickly, speed, oh! speed.

Shades of darkness, why delay?
Come and take me far away.
Take me from this seat of hell;
From this place where furies dwell;

A Candle-Light

From this world of woe and toil;
From this hall of waste and spoil;
From this field where death-knells ring,
Take me quickly on your wing.
Take me where the fairies live;
There the sun delight may give;
There is Justice, Truth, and Love;
There, perhaps, in peace I'll move;
There, wherever that may be,
Take me over rapidly.

New Britain, February 2, 1898.

Shortly After

I.

Sitting,
  Reflecting,
    On what has been passing
Not more than a fortnight ago;
Thrilling
  And chilling
    Comes up that strange feeling,
And moody and weary I grow;
Vivid,
  So livid,
    My fancy would have it,
And mem'ry imparts with its smart;—
Fever'd,
  So wearied,
    That countenance shrivel'd,
That weakness and fast-failing heart.

II.

Pending,
  Returning,
    Is ever that evening
Of mournful and terrible scene;—
Blowing
  And howling,
    The Elements scowling,
  With noises of tempest between!

A Candle-Light

Woeful
  And mournful
    And endlessly doleful
The sick-room in darkness appeared;
Scornful
  And harmful
    And terribly wrathful,
With vengeance seemed Nature upreared.

III.

Weeping,
  Unspeaking,
    The children were seeking
Some comfort within the bare room;
Mourning,
  Consoling,
    With friendly condoling,
The walls stood immersed in their gloom:
Tending
  And bending,
    And bringing, and taking,
I walked back and forth in the room;
Sighing
  And moaning,
    And coughing, and groaning,
Were heard in the silence and gloom.

New Britain, February 24, 1898.

After Reading Walt Whitman

HUMAN passions ever striving,
striving to an endless goal,
Now 'tis one thing, now another,
now a dozen things in one,
Now 'tis riches, worldly riches,
money'd riches of the Earth,
Now 'tis love and now 'tis power,
or some other fervent wish.

In the lonely meadows roaming
with a sweetest love in hand,
In the thickest meadows sitting
with his love so closely press'd,
Closely press'd against his bosom,
lip to lip so gently press'd,
Now a word so sweet and tuneful,
now a sigh so longing sweet,
While the breezes, gentle breezes
whisper low about their ears,
And the grass-blades, leaves, and flowers,
will not give the secret out.

Or the counter with the drawers
and the money stocks therein,
Silver coins and heaps of golden,
golden coins in many heaps,
And the packages of greenbacks,
silver-notes and bank-notes true,
And the checks and drafts and papers
which beget him wealth anew.

Or some high seat in the Commons,
or the house where Senate sits,
Or some other seat of power,
or some influential place,
By which he might the world subdue,
and be master of the race.

Such the hopes and aspirations,
such the wishes of the soul,
Always hoping, always wishing,
always yearning to that end,
Never cease his expectations,
never fail his hopes nor will.

But at last there is a failure
as misfortune once steps in,—
Ah! misfortune, mean misfortune,
fickle fortune thou art here!—

But the soul still suffers, suffers,
suffers still that weakling soul,
Till a phantom, plump and sturdy,
comes and takes a place therein.

Comes the phantom dress'd so nicely,
sembling much that other thing,
And, alluring Will and Reason,
makes the soul to stoop to it.

Happy now, O soul! O weakling!
happy thou in low estate!
With a phantom close embracing,
or a thing in substitute;
A substitute in form or fancy,
shielded much by tinsel gold,
Outward show its only virtue,
ostentation is its creed,
While debauchery and vices
are its chief and greatest meed.

But his soul did long for something,
long for what he could not get,
Till at last a kindred object
in his arms there lay embrac'd;
See the cheeks so flush'd and blushing,
pulse rebounding in his veins!

A Candle-Light

Eyes so flashing, forehead glowing,
graceful curls flow down his head;
Now he smiles and now he whispers,
sighing now such happy sighs,
While still closer, closer pressing,
pressing close that substitute;
No Elysium nor gardens,
and no Paradise for him,
'Tis his highest, chiefest moment,
happy moments these to him;
Till at last his life is wasted,
wasted now his vital force,
And he stands and looks around him,
sees the wreck and knows the cause.

Now 'tis done and all is over,
past is now the passion wild!
While he wonders, much bewilder'd,
at the fearful, stormy past.

What now? O soul, O weakling thou,
what must follow after this?
O miserable mortal!
Impoverish'd man!
How fearfully these passions play with thee!
Far first upon the highest mountain cliffs
Thou wafted art by awful winds,

Then from there by force tremendous
to the valley thou art sent;
As on wave's distorted waters
floats a light and weightless mass,—
Now it dips and now emerges,
now it sinks and now comes up,
Upward, downward, forward, backward,
every way 'tis toss'd about,—
So art thou, O man! O mortal!
drifting so on Fortune's wave.

What must follow! did I ask it?
see, the tale unfolds itself!
See his cheeks so pale with sorrow,
and his eyes with tears are dim,
Features downcast, shame betraying,
tremble now his limbs from fright;
Tremble they like wings of pigeons
that have just escap'd the hawk.

Tremble not, O soul affrighted!
tremble not, but gather strength!
Ah, he hears not these advices,
Oh, poor, miserable man!

New Britain. Written in the evening of April 14, 1898.

Too Fond of You, But Still

A Song.

Too fond of you to let you go,
But still, but still, alas!
The world demands, demands, demands,
And that must come to pass.

Then come more nigh and say good-by,
And kiss, and kiss the last;
The world demands, demands, demands,
And that must come to pass.

Good-by, my love, good-by, my dove,
But yet one more caress;
The world demands, demands, demands,
And it must come to pass.

Behold that Barge, the Devil's scourge,
That flames while sailing past;
The world demands that I embark,
And that must come to pass.

Then come more nigh and say good-by,
And kiss, and kiss the last;
The world demands that I embark,
And thus it comes to pass.

New Britain, May 11, 1898.

But Now, My Child, Good-By

But now the pleasant days have passed away
And we must part anon for years to come,
Therefore to you a word or two I'll say
That may in future time of use become;
When on a certain day more still and calm
Than most of latter days were wont to be,
You'll sit and read and understand the sum
Of these few words that I address to thee,
Then you will understand; and then you'll think
of me.

When you will learn to read and read aright,
And learn to look for things between the
lines;
When years have passed and passed their child-
hood bright,
And Wisdom starts to ope to you its mines;
When womanhood your lovely form entwines

And shows up Life in all reality;
And when, my child, as if with strongest wines,
Your head will reel with its perplexity,
Then turn to read these words; and then you'll think of me.

When all the dreams of childhood are no more,
But sterner problems come to forward view;
When fancied images and tales of yore
Will be replaced by phantoms quaint and new;
When bitter disappointments crowd on you
And show their signs of human misery;
Or when, perchance, more happy moments grow
And bring you well-deserved felicity,
Then may you read these lines and also think of me.

And then, mayhap, a vision, dim and blurred,
Will faintly spread itself, like distant mist,
And will recall some names that oft you heard,
And faces which so often you have kissed,
But which, just then, in dreams alone exist;
And from recuperative memory
May spring some words that often you have lisped,

And you may wish to know who taught them thee,
Then read these lines again, and then you'll think of me.

Then, if another vision take the field
And show a grewsome scene that once took place;—
Your sire on death-bed lain with wounds unhealed,
While all the friends, with downcast, mounful face,
Saw but Despair afloat in cloudy space;
Yourself were fled, though through much inquiry
You kept yourself informed about the case:
A hand yet came and changed it all to glee;
If you will know, then read these lines and think of me.

And when in distant lands and foreign climes
You hear an echo of a loving word,—
Though vague and undefined, like far-rung chimes
Whose dying notes can only just be heard,—
While gentle waves that through the air have stirred

L. of C.

Will bring you proof of boundless sympathy,
And will inform, what else must be inferred,
That human love is an infinity;
If then you read these lines you'll also think of me.

You go, my child, 'tis fate that bears you on,
And this same fate may bring more happy days,
For, men's affairs are sure to change anon
And on each morrow show a different phase;
But where you go, or what you do, always
Be sure to love the truth, the truth alone;
And if you find how difficult the ways
That lead whereto those pearly gems are grown,
Yet still keep on, and soon you'll have them as your own.

Beasts may cross your path, and clouds may gather round,
And fools may come to give their quaint advice;
The storms may rage and Falsehood shake the ground;
And mean Hypocrisy may seem so nice
The while she tries to plant her sordid vice;

And cold Indifference, to a great degree,
May try her influence to exercise:
But beasts, and storms, and foul hypocrisy,
Before the beacon-light of Truth must ever flee.

Beneath the current of our earthly lives
There runs a mystic stream of vital force;
It runs and leaps and foams and swiftly drives
The ship of Being on its wayward course;
Just what it is, or where its hidden source,
Or whither it does ultimately tend,
No man can say, nor find the secret doors:
Yet this is known, that all things with it blend
And destined seem forever on it to depend.

Its name or substance is not understood,
Its form unseen, its nature hid from view;
It has no outward shape nor ever could,
Nor is it white or black or red or blue;
It does not die, nor change, nor split in two,
Nor ever falters, but does still advance,
And forces thus its recognition due,
And proves itself a faculty of sense
With *gratification of self* as its chief essènce.

This secret force or hidden faculty
May just as well for good as evil serve,
And may conduce to endless misery,
Or bring one happiness without reserve;
'Tis thus the case if we but well observe
The inward state of man, we'll soon reveal
That every one, according his deserve,
The good or bad within his soul does feel,
Exactly as he did with his own conscience deal.

Thus some there are, themselves to gratify,
Resort to meanest methods known to man;
They swindle, cheat, and kill, or rob and lie,
And cause as much discomfort as they can;
They murder husbands, rob the widows then,
And lastly take the orphans to enslave;—
They carry to the end the cruel plan,
And even trample down the good and brave,
And never cease for pelf and wanton gold to crave.

Yet others, gentle, good, and ever kind,
Are often found, who do far better things;
Toward good-will and peace they are inclined,
And treat mankind as if a tribe of kings;
They help the helpless vessel when it sinks,

And do not leave the passengers to die;
They forge and then unite the friendship's links,
And seek to bring 'mong men a happy tie;—
But this they also do themselves to gratify.

The motive is the same in either case,
The consequences not at all the same;
In both pure selfishness with ease we trace,—
The one's being harmful, all disgrace and shame,
The other's, though, a credit to his name.
But are they all as happy in our sight?
Not so, indeed! The one's destructive game
Preys on his conscience both by day and night;
The other rests in peace and in assurèd right.

Thus human conscience tells the right from wrong,
And shows the proper course to be pursued;
Torments the wicked minds with weapons strong,
But fosters strength and hope in men of good
And makes their fervent spirits unsubdued.
But he alone is happy who has not
A guilty conscience, or a mind too crude;
He'll then be pleased to see his chosen lot,—
A blessèd name and reputation free from spot.

And such an one will ever find his soul
  Serene and quiet and in happy state;
And if the earthly fortunes from him roll,
  And disappears the wealth he had of late;
  And if he loses, too, his high estate,—
His name and title like his fortune spent,
  His friends have fled, and fled his loving mate,
While Grief and Sorrow follow their intent;—
Still in his guiltless soul he's happy and content:

Because his conscience tells him not of woes
  By him on many wretched people wrought;
His mind recalls him not some bitter foes
  Nor bloody battles that he may have fought;
  Compunction or remorse is not his thought
Who was on doing good forever bent:
  And thus, when Gloom and Pain make strange consort
And drive him fast toward the bitter end,
He still can say that he is happy and content.

I say these things to you that you may know,
  And learn to tell the pure and true from false,
And see that out of goodness good may grow,
  But meanness like a stealing viper crawls
  And stings the victim who, thus stung, soon falls;

Your loving heart and intellect sublime
Will hate the cruelties of selfish thralls,
And will perceive how wrong and great their crime
Against humanity, which they have waged all time.

My child, the carriage waits for you outside,
The luggage ready, groom is in his seat,
And down the harbor, on the surging tide,
There rolls the bark that waits your coming feet;
And farther still, the cars that run by heat
Will soon appear and bear you far away;
To new and distant shores you then will speed,
Where now your father watches night and day,
And walks the open fields, and grudges the delay.

Then come and say good-by, and print your kiss,
And pass your little arms around my neck;
Thus fondly, sweetly, like a little miss
That does her mother silently bedeck
With kisses, ever, ever without check:
And I, returning still what still I get,
Will watch that you, my child, may never lack
My offices nor service which may set
You in man's favor, that you may be happy yet.

A Candle-Light

Your eyes are filled with tears you know not why,
The sobs come forth though you are innocent;
And now your little brother stands close by,
Whose loving looks with those your own do blend
And seem to ask me what we thus intend;
As in a dream his lovely visage looms,—
His golden locks, his smile, his rosy hand,—
Ah, well, enough! too far the mind now roams;
Go, go,—like minstrel-birds that leave their winter homes.

New Britain, May 14, 1898.

The Path of Life

'Again the torrents flow;
Again the cold winds blow;
Again the dark clouds grow;
Again I sit on a dismal rock, and watch them as
they go.

Once more the gloom collects;
Once more the willow becks;
Once more the sapling cracks;
Once more I sit on a dismal rock, observing the
trodden tracks.

The one south-north is pressed,
And one runs east and west;
But which is worse or best,
I sat and thought on it very long, but still I have
never guessed.

The one to Limbo leads,
The other to Hades,
But where their starting heads,
I sat and looked for a distance great, but lost
them as winding threads.

The world went passing by;
The men and women nigh;

A Candle-Light

In arms their children lie;
They went and marched so swiftly on, I knew not
exactly why.

A number went this way,
And some the other way;
Yet none made slight delay.
But why they hurried as they went, I could not
with reason say.

The rain but made them wet;
The winds their limbs did fret;
The storm made awful threat;
Yet wind, and rain, and awful storm were melting
beneath their tread.

Some stopped to snatch a rose,
And some for slight repose,
But some with grace to pose;
And others still found time enough to dally with
their spouse.

But, weather-beaten all,
They answer some one's call,
And march to their swift fall;—
They answer a voiceless call, and blindly are made
to fall!

New Britain. Written in the afternoon of July 13, 1898.

Oh, Faint Not, Heart

Oh, faint not, heart! oh, faint not, heart!
  But bear the ecstasy;
Mistake it not, it is no smart,
  But simple joy for thee.

Just joy, though great, yet oh, don't faint,
  But bear it peacefully;
She has come back, came back the saint,
  Returned thy own Marie.

Returned her Spirit pure alone,
  Which like a phantom seemed;
As if a queen upon a throne,
  So grand she looked, I deemed.

"O phantom, phantom, tell me true,
  Art thou of her I loved?
Art thou of her whose death I rue?
  Of her, my dead beloved?"

A Candle-Light

"I am the one, nor am I dead,
  But in a monast'ry
I live my life, though dull and sad,
  In longings deep for thee."

"Then art thou dead, oh, dead indeed,
  And lost to all the world!
Nor hast thou thus obtained thy meed:
  Why hast thy life thus spoiled?"

I heard no answer, but away
  The phantom sped most free,
While I was left to roam and stray,
  And search for my Marie.

New Britain, July 21, 1898.

An Odd Moment

I START to write to-day,
But know not what to say,
Or what commence or how to end my letters of
to-day.

So mixed my thoughts appear,
Disorder'd seems my gear,
And all my efforts null become, or so to me
appear.

For how can your mind work
When diff'rent things there lurk?
When other members are at odds your mind can
never work.

Think of this and that comes up,
Now a fool and now a fop,
Now a daisy, now a lark, now a luring thing
comes up.

A Candle-Light

This you write and that goes down,
Call for white and you get brown,
Paint a face, an ass appears; write a line, 'tis full of jeers.

Even as the traveling man,
Without a compass, map, or plan,
Goes wearily his way until he's led quite far astray.

And now a cross-way lies
Outstretch'd before his eyes,
He knows not where to go, and in his thoughts alone he hies.

He thinks he's gone quite far,
And stops to thank his star,
When suddenly he looks around and sees he went not far.

Then starts to reason out
If he should turn about,
Or to proceed, or right or left; he cannot think it out.

This is the shortest way,
But that's the best, he'd say.
And so he argued with himself the rest of that
long day.

Until the night had dawned:
So there he made his haunt,
Upon the road to rest awhile, because the night
had dawned.

New Britain, September 7, 1898.

A Snow-Drift

I stood alone upon a hill
  Quite far removed from man's abode,
Where neither spring nor gentle rill
  Upon the steep rocks ever rode.

If ever spring or gentle rill
  About these cliffs were wont to play,
They are now dead, they are now still,
  Quite frozen on this winter day.

The hoary peaks were freezing cold,
  The dales were filled with falling snow,
The scatter'd trees, an age too old,
  Despaired, it seemed, to further grow.

The weeds were cropped, the grass was nipped,
  The naked twigs were crushed and broke;
Alone the blast but surged and skipped,
  In which fierce demons laughed and spoke.

"The fleeting spirits sped near by,
Returning still as still they ran."

All things were frightful, wild, and fierce,
And Nature seemed a wasteful void;
As if the storm the earth would pierce,
And render it a thing destroyed.

The desert far about gleamed white,
While darkness hover'd overhead;
And in the distance of the night
A dirge seemed ringing for the dead.

The moving shadows floated fast
Across the mantle white and pure;
Methought that phantoms swiftly passed
Of them that were but are no more.

Methought I saw the ghosts again
Of them that lived but now do not,
That once have toiled and hoped in vain,
But now have ceased and are forgot.

The fleeting spirits sped near by,
Returning still as still they ran;
I could not tell the reason why
I feared me as they thus began:

A Candle-Light

"We come from far and come from near,
And, ever going, still are here.
The living wish that they were dead,
We therefore are thus far ahead.
But having long in earth now lain,
We wish we were alive again.
  Restless, restless human beings,
  Hopeful, watchful living things,
  Ever wishing for the Night,
Which, when it comes, you wish for Light.
You wish for this and wish for that,
And wish for aught you know not what.
Oh, restless, restless human bees,
At work among the cumbrous trees.
Beset with sorrow, hope, and grief,
You suffer, yet have no relief.
But we are free from pain and toil,
And thus have most of Nature's spoil.
We sport with blasts and ride on winds,
And merry dance our airy limbs.
We hope not, hence we nothing lose;
We want not, as we nothing use.
We're pleased and happy, as you'll know
When you some day to us will go.
Then will we dance a merry round,
When snow again is on the ground.

We come from far and come from near,
And, ever going, still are here.
When once again the clouds appear,
You'll come and see us, do not fear."

I stood alone upon the hill,
Abashed and pierced by cold and dread;
The while the snow-drift raged on still,
The dirge yet ringing for the dead.

New Britain, November 27, 1898. Written at 2 A. M. of a snow-storm night.

End and Death Synonymous

A FRAGMENT.

"Whatever a beginning had
Must also have its end,
And whatso once with birth has met,
With Death must also blend."
Thus reads wise nature's cruel law;
Nor breach, nor intermitting flaw,
Admits the sad decree.
And earth, and stars, and planets great,
And men with beasts alike,
Must bow to one great common fate,
And take what chance may strike;
Nor moan, nor sigh, nor thus bewail,
Nor wish for aught that can avail,
But letting all things be.

And as those things their end do meet
Although of life knew not,
So, too, all things that knew Life's sweet,
Through Death with life must part.

And in the end 'tis all the same
If End or Death is thus to blame
For such a dissolution;
Nor think they of their kin behind,
If either beast or tree,
Or rock or one of human kind,
Or shining star it be.
They think not of their kin behind,
Who trouble, fret, and are so kind
To hope for restitution.

Thus was it many years ago,
When gods outnumber'd men;
And naked nymphs went to and fro,
Evading huntsmen's ken;
And spirits blithe did flitter by,
And stones could speak and trees would cry,—
Was then the golden age;
Then Cronus reigned, the godly son,
With Rhea, wife of his,
Such joy, such good was ne'er outdone,
Nor ever so much bliss;
Then gold was cheap, yet none in want,
All earth was an Elysian haunt,
And wisely ruled the sage.

A Candle-Light

Content were all, from man to frog,
The rocks and dales were green,
The sky was clear, unblurred by fog,
The rivers flowed serene.
Nor war was known, nor battleships
For distant shores or perilous trips,
No murder, theft nor rage;
But change there came and this was End,
And end alone,—not death,
For how can things that lived not mend
If not by mystic breath?
Yet find you much of diff'rence here
When End and Death you see from near?
Did cease or die the sage?

1898.

* * * * *

Epigram

The clouds, though mute,
Their own salute,
And often meet each other;
But people don't,
Or can't, or won't,
Salute or greet a brother.

1898.

Blow On, O Winds

Blow on, O fierce and savage winds!
  Nor cease for want of breath;
Nor spare your strength, nor turn you mild,
  Nor fear lest you prove death.

Come, blow your pangs and discord notes
  Into a heart of woe;
Into a frail receptacle,
  Where heartaches come and go.

Blow louder, fiercer, louder yet,
  Nor cease for bitter groans;
Pour in your sighs and anguish-wails,
  Pour in your rueful moans.

Pour in your ails and raking pains,
  Where welcomed they will be;
Your mournful, scornful, angry tunes,
  Your careless symphony.

Blow on, O fierce and savage winds!
  Nor heed a mortal's cry;
Blow louder, fiercer, louder yet,
  Like storms that cannot die.

New Britain, January 25, 1899.

Spring Is Coming

Wake, my love, for Spring is coming,
Trees are budding,
Grass is springing,
Birds are singing,
And the ground is moist with dew:
Is moist with dew, with dew the ground,
Whose verdant mantle grows anew,
While hills with shrub and bush are crowned,
And dales with buds and bloom abound.

Wake, my love, from thy long sleeping,
Spring is creeping,
Gently leaping,
Slyly peeping,
Peeping through the window-panes:
The window-panes that glow with light,
While many show'rs and drizzling rains
Are yet to come with days most bright,
And bring the pleasant summer night.

Let thy winter's slumber cease now,
For the season
Knows no treason
And with reason
Comes about; in time about:
And wakes each sleeper with a start,
While setting gloom and cold in rout,
Makes every dismal day depart,
And brings glad sunshine to each heart.

New Britain, March 16, 1899.

The Hours

THE hours do fly
So swiftly by,
  And leave no room for leisure;
For now they hie,
And now they try
  To give you shorter measure.

So swift they run,—
There is no fun,
  I tell you candid maxims;
For soon they're done
That just begun
  To count your days and actions.

And as they haste
Into the waste
  Of years so long forgotten,
They make you taste
Of life's sweet paste,
  And then declare 'tis rotten.

Declaring thus,
They make no fuss,
  But end your days all sudden;
And bring you hence,
Beyond the fence,
  Where some before have trodden.

They make short work,
And never shirk
  Their duty, all too humble;
And like the Turk,
Or careful clerk,
  Can trip without a stumble.

Then ends your life
And all your strife,
  As if you've never striven;
And friend, child, wife,
By Death's shrill fife,
  Are also thither driven.

For who can hold
The hours so bold
  That run with speed of thunder?
Or who infold
The things untold
  That fall and break asunder?

A Candle-Light

Nor these nor those
Could we inclose,
  Or keep from playing hopper;
Hence as it goes
We must suppose
  Is just the thing most proper.

New Britain, March 18, 1899.

Betwixt the Clouds

When clouds obstruct the sky,
And darkness draws more nigh,
And rain or snow is threat'ning to descend;
When winds blow discord notes
And seas bear ill their boats,
And waves and storms grow dark with their intent;
Then leaves my spirit this poor clay,
To roam in space, or where it may,
At night, at morn, or close of day.

And I become transformed,
My spirit changed, deformed,
Or vaporized into a fleeting blast;
Then all myself is lost,
As dew upon the frost,
Or raindrops on the ocean's surface vast;
And, leaving then this mortal clay,
I roam in space by night or day,
All helpless, though without delay.

So strange and sad a plight
I wish no mortal wight,
That him may fail such pain and toil and grief;
For 'tis unsafe as dust,
Hazardous to intrust
One's soul to tempests, e'en for moments brief:
Yet as I leave this form of clay,
And soar still upward, night or day,
Some force unseen do I obey.

A force unseen impels,
As if by magic spells,
And sends me, all-unwilling, through the air;
Then, passing out of self,
I gambol like an elf,
And skip between the clouds and billows there;
For, leaving, as I do, this clay,
I also leave all that is gay,
Into the gloomy heights to stray.

And there my place I fix,
Where earthly murmurs mix
With heav'nly sounds and voices from on high;
Then words of hope and fear
Assail my listful ear,
And all that's being said in their reply:

For when I leave this mold of clay,
Into the distant heights to stray,
I must need hear what angels say.

And murmurs soft and faint,
As if a stifled plaint,
Rise from the earth and on the tempest speed;
And these then louder grow,
And frame these words most slow:
"We suffer, oh, we suffer, and we bleed!"
As likewise when I left this clay
Into the cloudy heights to stray,
I heard them those same words to say.

The answer from above
Descended like a dove,
And spoke in accents sweet a soothing word;
It whisper'd mild and low
To those adown below,
And said: "We heard you; ah, we heard, we heard!"
For, though I left my form of clay,
And went in fancy here to stray,
I yet can know what Spirits say.

"Then what remains for us,"
On earth was question'd thus,
"Who ever fall and stumble 'neath the yoke?

A Candle-Light

What shall we now perform,
Or how withstand the storm,
And how subvert cruel Nature's fatal stroke?
For we, frail creatures of the clay,
But born to live a single day,
We suffer till we pass away."

And the retort came then:
"Let all the living men
Improve their souls and cultivate the mind;
Then pain and grief and woe
To the four winds will go,
And happy days will come upon mankind:
And ye, though creatures of frail clay,
Will yet rejoice in your short day,
And live a life most bright and gay."

These things I truly heard,
This pleasant, cheerful word,
As well as the complaints that rise from man;
And now and once again,
When I 'mid clouds remain,
Advices new declare some new-laid plan:
For, though I am but mortal clay,
I yet can leave it when I may,
Into celestial heights to stray,
And listen to what Spirits say.

New Britain, April, 1899.

My Wither'd Plant

Drooping and wither'd and low,
  My favorite stands;
Its slender leaves shrinking below
  The gathering bands,
Like weeds that in midwinter grow
  On overflow'd lands.

Oh, what can I do for my plant,
  Forsaken that seems?
Its flowers, its freshness and scent
  Have left it like dreams;
Its life-giving sap is all spent,
  Like tropical streams.

Will water bring back to it life,
  Or fresh morning dews?
Will sunshine rekindle its life,
  That all things renews?
Or must it succumb to the knife
  Of deadly abuse?

A Candle-Light

I add to it cool, sparkling balm,
From deep mountain springs;
And set it at evening 'neath calm
And shadowy wings;
While mornings with dew I embalm
Its yellowish sprigs.

I tend it and rear it with care,
Like tenderest child;
I bring it 'mid breeze and fresh air
Of seasons most mild;
And set it in sunshine's warm glare,
When showers subside.

I bring for it pebbles and sand
From southernmost seas;
I feed it on richest of land
From muse-haunted lees,
And bathe it in vapors as bland
As midsummer's breeze.

But none of these things can avail
My plant to revive;
Its roots and its branches so frail
No more can survive;
And I, though attempting, yet fail
New means to contrive.

I lift up its low-drooping head
And kiss it awhile;
Then seeming before me is spread
A mother's hard trial,
Who, holding her child that's half dead,
Affects yet a smile.

For wither'd and lifeless and cold
My darling appears;
Like some gentle lamb of the fold
That's trembling with fears,
When, knife in hand, cruel and bold,
The slaughterer nears.

New Britain, April, 1899.

The Day of May

THE harbinger of gladness rose
One early hour in May,
And on his wing with song he chose
To usher in the day.

He chose with sweetest song proclaim
The day that is to come,
So that all things their share may claim
Of Spring's refreshing balm.

Flies high the lark on agile wings;
Disperse the thin, white mists;
Respond the leaves while Zephyr sings;
Forsake the birds their nests.

The dawn now breaks, and darkness flees
To Night's obscure abode,
And on the tops of hills and trees
The sun's first rays then glowed.

The mountains were imbued in gray
And silver-shining light,
While on the surf the rising spray
Was pure and snowy white.

The marble sky was clear and blue,
  The ground was beryl-green;—
Young Nature donned her freshest hue,
  As never yet was seen.

The morning star, with fading eye,
  Glanced down upon the earth,
Then vanished in the azure sky,
  As if of lesser worth.

Then in the east the rising sun
  Sent forth his golden rays,
And soon his daily course begun,
  As he is wont always.

And all the fields and all the land
  Awoke to new delights,
And in the dales and on the strand
  Were seen resplendent sights.

And people young, in bright attire,
  Were welcoming the day;
For nothing more could they desire
  In that fair month of May.

New Britain, April 24, 1899.

The Letter That Never Came

One day in the earliest hour,
Ere aught was awake or astir,
A lady sat lone in her bower
Awaiting the letters to her,
Out of which, with a white, trembling hand,
She might pick just the one from a friend.

She sat there, most anxiously waiting
To hear the good letterman's tread,
While secretly joy contemplating
When once that sweet letter is read;
For how good is a word from an one
Than whom kinder or better are none.

The time is now past for the dawning;
The letterman did not appear:
And now it is late in the morning,
Yet is not the carrier near.
Oh, how careless and stubborn is Fate!
To thus make that sweet letter so late.

The noon of the day is now passing,
And messages reach every home;
A note, or a word, or a blessing,
From Europe, from Venice, from Rome:
They rejoice in assurance of bliss,
And extract from each sentence a kiss.

But this is denied to our lady,
Who pensive sits, silent and sad;
And lo! how the night is so speedy
In closing the day, good or bad.
But alas! oh, alas for the name!
That sweet letter that day never came.

O carrier, faithless and cruel,
How durst thou thus fail in thy task?
How canst thou, like some senseless mule,
Refuse what a lady does ask?
Yet alas! ay, alas just the same,
For that letter that day never came.

New Britain, May 20, 1899. Written for a young lady on request.

Spring

Thou yearly minister of happiness;
Dispeller of dejection and distress;
The hope of youth and comforter of age;
The theme for wit, philosopher, and sage;
Thou whom all praise, yet praise not half enough;
Whom poets sing, yet seem to mock and scoff,—
For thou thyself art poesy and song,
Surpassing all the mortal minstrel throng;
On thee the whole world showers lasting thanks,
As trees their fruit upon the river banks,
Where, drinking largely, they as large repay
With spice and blossom when 'tis blossom day;
Thou, then, O gentle Spring, the joy of earth,
That bring'st delight and giv'st to Beauty birth;
That deck'st the ground with verdure fresh and green,
And mak'st the waters as the sky serene;
That renovat'st all things and bring'st new life,
Empower'st weaklings, fit'st them for their strife;
Of thee, O all-prevailing, heav'nly thing,
Do I, poor mortal, now presume to sing.

I strike my lute and bid my harp to thrill,
That its vibrations all the air may fill.
For lo! how love and life and joy and bliss
Float on the breeze and on the breezes kiss.
They float thereon with angel wings outspread,
By seraphs follow'd and by seraphs led,
And of their scents abundantly send forth,
To bathe the globe in this delightful froth;
While with their breath, that's tender as 'tis sweet,
They issue blessings as they softly breathe.
So that the world by their quick touch revives,
And things long lifeless now take on new lives.
Revives the world, the lifeless and the live,
And for perfection all at once do strive.
The hoary meadows and the blasted fern,
The silent rocks and mountains vast and stern,
The earth inanimate and valleys deep
Where silence reigns and winter shadows sleep,
The slumb'ring seas and sluggish river streams,
The frozen landscape breeding winter dreams,
All these as well as every other thing
Become at once transformed by gentle Spring.
In greenest livery the mountains dress,
The leaf-topped orchards wear new loveliness;
And in the earth the germinating seeds
Prove that o'er Death Life still his triumph leads.

A Candle-Light

The valleys now with flow'ry beds are filled,
Wherein the brilliant sunshine is instilled.
While slumb'ring seas and sluggish river streams
Run swift their course as lightning's flashing beams;
Their foam in vapors spreading on the way,
And sweetest fragrance seems their downy spray.
The water-fowls, between the air and sea
Dispute their place and know not where to be;
For 'tis as pleasant to be here as there,
And just as good in water as in air.
Here all the finned and web-toed creatures swim,
And leap and frolic, and the bottom skim.
There birds of flight their wings give ample use,
While gentle Zephyrus his breath lets loose.
Then tongue-shaped petals and fresh, pointed leaves
A rustling concord play, while 'neath the eaves
And in the tops of trees the warbler sings,
That all the air with tremulous music rings.
Hence soft and liquid warbles, full of cheer,
In mellow strains fall lightly on the ear.
The happy robin gives his voice full sway,
And cheerfully inspires the rising day.
The cardinal, the bluebird, and still more
Of the wing'd throng their joy profusely pour.

The twitt'ring sparrows and those of their kind
Construct their humble homes, though softly lined,
That there with ease they may repose by day,
And by the night may chirp their amorous lay.
The while the woodcocks, in a giddy round,
Go circling aimlessly above the ground,
As if in ecstasy their wits they lost,
And heed nor trap nor snare at any cost.
So, too, all other beings are full of joy,
And wist not how their time best to employ.
The squirr'ls leap up and clamber down the trees,
The rabbits linger in the tufted lees,
The hare, the fox, and others of the field,
To utter happiness their senses yield.
The fleeting chamois and swift-footed deer,
The lively antelope that quails with fear,
Nor quail nor fear upon the lofty peaks,
Where naught is heard save eagles' passing shrieks.
And on the prairies ruminating herds
Full jolly ramble, like the flocks of birds.
While down the hills, upon the shady side,
The shepherds tend the objects of their pride;
For rams and lambs and ewes must ever be
The pride of shepherds as their ecstasy.
They tend their flocks,—these youthful, rustic swains,
And all day long chant their melodious strains,

While rural scenes by them are highly praised,
And rural objects to the sky upraised.
Nor fail they to proclaim in ardent airs
Their stirring passions and their love affairs,
While those that are the cause of all their love
Are more extolled than are the gods above;
That neither gods, nymphs, nor Elysian shades,
Compare in beauty with these mortal maids.
So strange a charm in Spring resplendent lurks;
So great a change on beast and man it works.

Great is the dreadful fear that smites our souls
When from the north the wind impetuous rolls,
And swoops upon the highland and the plain,
That woods and thickets bend before the strain.
Then terrible are forests, thus disturbed,
When with the storm the growling beasts are heard
That deeply there lie crouching in their caves,
And with their voices aid the trav'ling waves.
Yet when mild Spring arrives, behold the change!
Behold the transformation all so strange.
The woods and forests that were erst so dark,
The leafless trees with their decaying bark,
Nor dark nor leafless are, nor now decay,
But freshly bloom as brightly shines the day.
The sylvan brutes that nestle in their lairs,
As leopards, jaguars, lions, wolves, and bears,

That prowl about most terribly and grim,
And ceaseless howl at dusky evening dim,
Nor prowl nor howl, nor terrible appear,
On this the mildest season of the year.
But mating, as they do, at early morn,
Or when the crescent moon inclines one horn,
They dally, smile, and show their pranks and wiles,
That young and happy Nature with them smiles.
Nor need we wonder, for when Pyrrha and
Deucalion stood on the barren strand,—
The flood being past, but of the human race,
Except this pious pair, was left no trace,—
Seized with regret, observing this great waste,
At last the oracle's advice embraced,
And threw behind their backs their Mother's bones,
That human beings might rise from out these stones;
And human beings, men and women, rose
In wondrous numbers, as the story goes,—
But yet, when that occurred 'twere doubtless then
The time of Spring, for thus alone could men,
All hale and living, from dead stones arise,
And take to life and to new enterprise,
As never could be done in better wise.

New Britain, May, 1899.

Fatality

A GRIM, black terror o'er my head
  Doth hover constantly;
With sable wings far overspread
  Is foul Fatality.

And where I trend and where I hie,
  It runneth after me;
And where I stand and where I lie
  Is there Fatality.

I wend me here and wend me there,
And seek the Night's obscurèd lair;
Then, weary grown of toil and care,
I throw aside this wild despair
And seek for people debonair
And good and gentle, thinking there
  I'll find some sympathy;
I seek for faces kind and fair,
Or friends that might for once declare
That by their hearthstones I might share

The pleasures—which to me are rare—
  Of hospitality:
But in the Night's obscurèd lair,
'Neath friendly roofs, as everywhere,
  Resides Fatality.

To Pleasure's luring roads I turn
My hasty steps, with hopes to learn
What balm would fill my ready urn,
What comforts could my soul discern;
Perhaps at last I'll cease to yearn
For the unknown, and for me earn
  Repose and constancy:
All that which I ere long did spurn,
The hidden walks where rose and fern
Glow in the passion blasts that burn
Deep through one's soul, where men oft learn
  Regret's deep mystery;
These, then, I tread, but ah, the stern,
Gaunt, spectral form I soon discern,
  Of grim Fatality.

Disgust and terror fill my heart,
While nature gives a second smart;
Then, stagg'ring 'neath this sudden dart
Of fatal arrows, to depart
In grief and sorrow now I start,

Yet striving by all human art
To ease my misery:
Away from men, from Traffic's mart,
From friendly roof, from friendly hearth,
Dropped is now Pleasure's mazy chart,—
'Tis books, 'tis books now play the part
Of my good company:
But from the book-shelves I upstart,
'Mid dusk and dust, behold the tart
Grim fiend, Fatality.

Distracted and alarmed I fly,
With arms outstretche'd for help I cry;
Oh, help a wretch, ye standers-by!
Drive off the beast that hovers nigh;
Behold his clutches in my thigh,
His fangs now in my throat,—I die!
Ah me; oh, misery:
Unheeded, to my kin I hie,
For sure, I thought, I could rely
On them to heed my pleading sigh,
That they at least attempt and try
Dispel this infamy:
But oh! no sooner them I spy,
Alas! with them, too, I descry,
Abides Fatality!

Ah, deathly, horrid, fatal fiend,
O grim Fatality!
What when my scatter'd hopes are gleaned
And blasted all by thee?

What when thou this frail soul subdu'st,
And thou its master be?
What when this frame at last imbu'st
In endless misery?

Wilt thou still mock, thy victim scorn,
And laugh eternally?
Thou fierce and ghastly, gaunt, hell-born,
O cruel Fatality!

New Britain, July, 1899.

A Thought

Every city has its graveyard,
  Every homestead has its grave;
In the graveyard dear ones slumber,
  In the homestead dear ones weep:
Weep the youngsters, sleep the dead ones,
  Aches the mother's beating heart,
Till, beweeped, for the cold graveyard
  She as well does soon depart.

November 20, 1899. Written on a passenger train to New York, while observing a cemetery on the way.

The Tears, They are Many; the Smiles, They are Few

My misfortune or fortune, I cannot say which,
Is to notice the woes in which people are rich;
All the heartrending woes of a suffering man
Who despairingly lingers on life's sullen span,
  Reattempting the tempting life ever anew:
Or the widow's deep sob, or the orphan's deep
    moan,
And the dying man's whisper of faltering tone;
  For the tears, they are many; the smiles, they
    are few.

And they come to me, come to me, old and the
    young,
Their sad tales to relate with such sadness that
    clung
At my heart more than once, and produced such
    a pain
That I scarce could recover my senses again,
  Or recall that good cheer which to mortals is
    due:

And their sad, bitter stories with patience I heard,
That my blood with mad vehemence greatly was stirred;
For the tears, they are many; the smiles, they are few.

Oh! how sad is the life of the poor and the blind;
For the first cannot live, and the latter not find
The high-road to the castle where dwells the king Life;
Ay, sad, sad is the painful and parallel strife
Which abates not nor fails with each day to renew:
But the poor in the streets their own miseries sing,
And the poor at my door their new miseries bring;
That the tears, they are many; the smiles, they are few.

I walk out 'mong the people and hear them complain
Of their ill-breeding lot in a dolorous strain,
And I enter their homes, and I sit by their hearth,
And I hear out with patience the sorrow and smart
Which afflicted their lives with a burden undue:

In the streets, in the shops, in the mansion and
hut,
Is the passion of strife and the grim daily rut;
And the tears, they are many; the smiles, they
are few.

And my breast feels oppress'd and discovers no
rest,
And my mind is tormented and greatly distress'd,
While the blood trickles down from the sides of my
heart,
And compels a sensation which fain I would part
If it did not return ever fresh, ever new:
For the people, they tell me their life-during
throes,
And their ceaseless, recurrent, though changeable
woes;
That my tears, they are many; my smiles, they
are few.

New Britain, January 31, 1900.

A Message

WHOEVER finds me, by the waves upcast,
Will read these lines, perchance, with eyes aghast.
The World moves on, and Nature every day
Is newly born and quickly dies away;
One Thing exists that does all things comprise,
And Space and Matter in its bosom lies;
Therefrom all else proceed, both good and bad,
And back return, both to one fountain-head:
So as the World moves on, as Nature lives,
As that One Thing its Essence freely gives
To all its endless broods of progeny
That lived and shall live through Eternity,
So Man, unmindful of all consequence,
Should give the Rule its free predominance.
If this enigma you cannot resolve,
The Ocean will the mystery dissolve.
Go to the spot where you discovered me
And send me drifting on the boundless sea,
Then, when I disappear, still follow out
My destined course, but purge you of all doubt,

And think how far, how wide I shall be borne
Upon the billows, lone yet not forlorn,
Then ask the waves what shall their purpose be
To waft me thus through all Infinity,
If ever they shall stop, if ever cease,
Pervert the Rule and rest in stagnant ease,
Then they will answer with a mighty roar,
"We shall roll on as we have rolled before."

July 7, 1900. Written aboard the "Ella" and set afloat in a sealed flask on the Atlantic Ocean, 29° N. lat., 61°50′ W. long.

Onward, Still On

ONWARD, still on, the watchword goes,
  Which sends me ever hence,
That ere I find some slight repose
  Anon I'm banished thence.

Onward, still on, from land to land
  I wander on my way,
With none to heed or understand
  My sad and tuneless lay.

Tuneless and sad the lay I sing,
  And broken is my harp;
Untoned the voice, untuned the string,
  The accent bitter sharp.

For where I go no harmony
  Of living sounds I hear,
But fearful notes of irony
  And people's hateful sneer.

And we, poor singers of these days
  Of barter and of trade,
We cannot sing of other lays
  Save what the times have made.

Hence as I go from shore to shore,
  From place to place I go,
I hear the watchword evermore
  Of onward, ever so.

Here to the ocean driven, then,
  I spend my weary hours,
Far from the homes of wretched men,
  'Mid Nature's wildest pow'rs.

O Ocean, Ocean, boundless Sea,
  I pray thee, tell me, do,
Is there a place of rest for me,
  Or must I ever go?

O Ocean, Ocean, boundless Sea,
  Why heaves thy bosom so?
Beats thy great heart in sympathy
  For him that on must go?

A Candle-Light

Nay, as I roll upon thy face
  Some comfort I perceive,
For here I think I find a place
  At least for short reprieve.

Then pray receive what I can give,
  And store it in thy depth;
'Tis but a tear dropped in the eve
  When here I sat and wept.

And when I'll think that thy great heart
  Is swelled by tears of mine,
I'll be content my bitter part
  I should not quite resign.

O Ocean, Ocean, rise not so,
  Nor cast this angry frown,
Else I'll believe that I must go
  Once more still onward, on.

Aboard the "Ella" on the Atlantic Ocean, July 13, 1900.

"Ella"

Ella, Ella, skipping ship,
Going on a Southern trip,
From New York to Martinique,
Greater fortunes there to seek.
Bear me thither on thy breast,
Gently as you would a guest,
For on shore I was not used
To be very much abused.
Seasick was I not ashore,
Homesick was I not before;
Seasick, homesick, know you what
This may mean, or know you not?
But the sea no doubt to thee
Is what land may be to me,—
A good home and haven's rest,
Full of blessing and possessed
Of good cheer and comfort's store,
Giving life for evermore.
So, sweet *Ella,* if you were
Never seasick, please deter
From thy jumping, frolic's game,
This high romping, be more tame,

A Candle-Light

That I may like thee abide
In repose and peace beside.
Ella, Ella, three-mast bark,
Hasting to thy Southern mark,
Stoutly built and well preserved,
Five-and-twenty years well served
On the ocean far and wide,
Like the ebbing of the tide,
'Way upon the China seas,
Then among the Caribbees,
Next upon Atlantic's face,
Northward still thy course to trace,
'Mong the nations there to trade,
That thy fortunes may be made.
Then on some far western shores,
Thou deliver'st up thy stores.
South and North America,
All around wild Africa,
On the Black and Baltic seas,
Sailing, cruising at thy ease,
'Mong the Tartars, Russians, Turks,
Merchants French and English clerks,
Here to deal and there to trade,
That thy fortunes may be made.
But now, *Ella,* faithful ship,
Going on thy Southern trip,
Staves and lumber in thy hold,
Merchandise the worth of gold,

Taking far and guiding well,
That at profit they might sell,
From New York to Martinique,
Speed thee fast and speed thee quick.
While the crew that carry thee
Are true devils of the sea.
Five are black and two are tan,
Each one passing for a man.
But thy officers, though white,
Are in nature black as night.
Captain is a reprobate,
Worse than captain is the mate;
Drinkers both and old in sin,
Loose in speech, in morals thin.
But the second mate must be
Wholly in obscurity.
Such a rascal never yet
'Mong the nations have I met;
Three wives having, in good style,
Seeks more victims to beguile.
Nor would he stop short of aught
That may happen in his thought,
And who knows what happens not
In the thoughts of such a sot?
But, dear *Ella,* speed thee quick
To the port of Martinique.

Aboard the "Ella," Atlantic Ocean, July 13, 1900.

Where Rest the Souls as Good as Thine

FAR, far away on Nature's brink
Lie golden isles that never sink;
Outpeering each a thousand times,
Resounding wide with silver chimes,
And angels' songs of rhythmic rhymes.

Sunshine beams ever on these isles,
Mere time beguiling with its smiles.
In the interior are seats of gold,
Reserved for many hosts untold;
Nor plain these seats, but trimmed with fine
Onyx and pearls that brightly shine,
Where rest the souls as good as thine.

Aboard the "Ella," Atlantic Ocean, July 14, 1900.

NOTE.—The first letters of these lines spell a name.

A Doctor-Rogue

In the valley of the moonlight,
  Far removed from water's edge,
Lies a city rich in sunlight,
  Rich in wealth and nature's pledge;
And this city from her nature
  Is the "Iron City" called,
For the most her manufacture
  Is from iron into gold.

Rearing highly toward heaven
  Are the chimneys of the shops,
And of churches cones eleven,
  With their belfries and their clocks;
But the highest toward heaven
  Rising are the scents and smells
Of saloons some eighty-seven,
  These in dens and those in cells.

Vainly were you in that city
  Should you miss the best to see,
Should you miss him 'twere a pity,
  Miss the Doctor-Rogue to see;

A Candle-Light

For of all the rogues that ever
  Lived upon this earthly frame,
None could be so rash and clever,
  None so perfect at his game.

It is he that through the alleys
  Smiling comes and cringes low,
It is he that often sallies
  Through the town with face aglow;
On his lips a smile is beaming,
  But his heart is filled with gall,
That when hating it is seeming
  That he loves and blesses all.

Nodding, fawning, bowing, smiling,
  Cheerfully your hand is pressed,
While he thinks how best beguiling
  You for his own interest;
Tending sick and treating sickness,
  He knows when 'tis well to cure,—
When the patient's purse in thickness
  Is reduced all well and sure.

Going, then, from house to household,
  He takes care of every purse,
That none fatten more than threefold
Ere he drains it of its curse;

So the hypocrite of nature
Newest victims ever finds,
He who's bent and slim of stature;
Writ his name is in these lines.

Aboard the "Ella," on the Atlantic, July 14, 1900.

A Butterfly Far Out to Sea

On its beautiful winglets of purple and blue
A poor sea-loving butterfly eastwardly flew.
And it sped on its perilous journey alone,
Undisturbed by the breeze upon which it was
blown,
For it loved an adventure as new as 'tis strange
O'er the foam of the ocean and billows to range.
How delightful the breeze and how pleasant the
day
For this creature of summer, this insect of May.
And it stretches its winglets as far as it might,
That its exquisite colors may shine in the light;
And it skips and it prances and dances with glee
O'er the prospect of finally crossing the sea.
Never butterfly risked an adventure so great,
Never insect with Nature attempted debate.
And so fine was the breeze and so pleasant the
day
For this insect of summer, this creature of May.

But not far from the shore, scarce the journey began,
'A strong gale sent its breath the deep waters to fan,
'And the billows rose high to encroach on the sky,
And the clouds gather'd dark on the ocean to lie.
All things changed their appearance and mad grew the hour,
Wide resounding the fury of natural pow'r.
Then the butterfly feared to advance on its way,
'And attempted returning to land and to day;
To the gardens of flowers, to harbors of rest,
Back where butterflies should be, as for them is best.
But alas! oh, alas! 'tis too late to recall
That which has been accomplished, which must now befall.
For as by the light breeze it was firstly decoyed,
So upon the strong gale it was killed and destroyed.

'Aboard the "Ella," Atlantic Ocean, July 16, 1900.

The Triumph of Death

The whistling frog, the creeping snake,
The humming spider and the scorpion,—
All of the fatal brood that make
Their homes beneath the constant tropic sun;
These, with their humming and their whistling cry,
Impart a lesson infinitely high.

They seem to teach and seem to say,
That in those regions even where the light
Bequeaths great beauty on each day,
And struggles to abolish darksome night,
E'en here the everlasting strife takes place
'Twixt Nature's highest and her lowest race.

They seem to say and seem to teach
That in the land where Beauty lingers long,
Where plants the highest stages reach
Of growth luxuriant and fragrance strong,
There, too, there most, abounds immortal Death,
Lives in each glare, and dwells in every breath.

Martinique, W. I., July 22, 1900.

"Au Sans Pareil"*

A DISTANT land; a little shop
With tiny windows at the top;
Small wares and bric-à-brac in bins;
Two caps on shelves, three stocking twins;
Three little chickens in a cage;
Four fishes swimming in a rage;
Some cabbage, beets, Napoleon's bust;
Old medals, coins, and iron rust;
Quaint books and curiosities;
Perfumes and soap; a box of cheese;
Silks, cotton, paintings, eggs, and drugs;
Two flasks of wine, of gin three jugs:—
This wondrous store that thought it nice
To have *"Au Sans Pareil"* as its device.

Martinique, W. I., July 23, 1900.

* Inscribed over the door of a small variety store in St. Pierre, Martinique.

In Yon Tiny Cottage

A SONG.

In yon tiny cottage dwell twain maidens,
Twain maidens, twain maidens dwell there;
They be of my soul the only cravings,
So bonny these lassies and fair.
And when I went out,
In darkness and doubt,
To saunter one eve on the road,
Their shadows, meseemed,
Like angels have gleamed
Within their well-lighted abode.

And then it was that I loved these maidens,
These maidens, twain maidens I loved;
For both had lang hair as black as ravens,
And eyes like of lassies beloved.
But when I returned,
Though all my soul burned,

I halted and asked me this quest:
Love they me as well,
Why will they not tell?
Or play these fair elfies in jest?

Love they me as well,
Why will they not tell?
Or play these fair elfies in jest?

West Winsted, Conn., August 18, 1900.

My First Fishing Expedition

My friend and I, one sunny day,
Set out a-fishing on the bay.
If bay or pond or little brook
I did not take the pains to look,
For I had more than I could do,
And so did he, and so would you,
In keeping out a watchful eye
Upon the pond and on the sky,
And on the fish and on the shore,
Still thinking what will come before.
But list and hear how it was all,
What happed to us, what did befall,
And if you find you cannot laugh
I should much grieve in your behalf,
And pray you go to some good leech
Who soon may to your liver reach,
Then purge it of the bilious mumps,
And cleanse it clean of cheesy lumps,
And send afresh the portal blood,
And expurgate hepatic mud,

Dilate the tubes, expand the lobes,
And set therein fresh infant hopes,
That it may serve its purpose good
And be anew in working mood;
Then he may likewise tend thy spleen,
And make it pink instead of green;
Tune up your heart and set its strings,
And get in order all such things,
That you may then appreciate
Such tales as I will now relate.

Well, it was on a sunny day
When we went fishing on the bay;
No thought had we of rain or storm,
Or trouble in whatever form,
That in our finest clothes we dressed,
And donned whatever was our best.
Our hats were straw, our suits were light,
Our bosoms starched, our collars white.
But of umbrellas thought we not,
Nor that ill chance may be our lot;
So fine the day, so clear the air,—
No fog nor cloud was anywhere.
And this was, too, my first attempt
At such affairs,—the fish exempt,
I must admit, from much abuse,
Which pray receive as my excuse.

My friend had therefore promised me
That we should empty out the sea,
And rid it of its living freight,—
If only they will see our bait.
We'll catch the eels, we'll catch the trout,
Catch all save whales, we had no doubt.
So two large buckets put we on
The seat of our light phaëton,
And started to the pond or bay
On that fair summer, sunny day.
  Miles upon miles we rode and rode,
And rocked and tossed in gleeful mode,
Until at last we reached a spot
Where some do fish, but all should not.
Alighted we, all gay-attired,
And went into the boat we hired,
But first we started to prepare
The fishing tackle that was there,
Whereon to catch the frolic game,
Secure and firmly keep the same.
But oh, the inexperienced hand,
What torments must it not withstand!
The hooks into my fingers hooked,
And pierced my flesh, that I have looked
All scratched and bleeding, and my clothes
Were often rent, you may suppose.

But worse than that, I nearly caught
From my friend's head,—the killing thought!
With my own hook, his,—shall I say?
His true right eye, alack the day!
Nor was this all; the lines were far
Too long for me, and like a spar
The rod did seem, so much in length,
And equal to a mast in strength.
At last we rowed out on the sea,—
That kind of sea where frogs may be,
And as we did so in the sky
The darksome clouds came sailing by.
We rowed and rowed for a good spot
Where some do fish, but all should not;
And then we anchor'd 'mong the weeds,
As here, 'tis said, the king-fish leads
His court and kingdom, where we might
Catch thousands of them ere the night.
And so the clouds have anchor'd there,
Above our heads, low in the air.
These clouds, we said, will pass anon,
And we once more will see the sun.
Hence joyfully we dropped our lines
Within those circumscribed confines.
I need not tell, I feel the shame,
Entangled how those lines became

That neither knew which one was his,
Which rod, which line, if that or this.
My first attempt, though, it was yet,
Which pray recall and don't forget.
I caught a fish, 'tis true, just one,
And then I thought how well I've done;
It was a tiny mackerel,
And oh, so young, it seemed as well
To send it back to whence it came,
That it may earn itself a name.
So I returned it to the sea,
In peace to live, unharmed of me.
My friend then likewise one had caught,
A pickerel, for which he fought
Most valiant, and lastly did
Unhook him and securely hid
In the great pail, but when once more
We dropped the lines, how it did pour!
Pour what—the fishes? No, the rain,
That came as from a water-main.
What could we say, what could we do,
But hasten back without ado?
So up we gathered all our store
And swiftly reached the reeking shore,
But then the rain at once did stop
And shed, it seemed, its final drop.

What was there now for us to do
But try once more, and wouldn't you?
Of course you would, and so did we
Put out again upon the sea.
Yet as we came to that same spot
Where some may fish, but I will not,
Behold once more the rain comes down
And changes us from dude to clown.
But now, we thought, we must outwit
This frisky rain, if we but sit
And wait till it will pass away,
Quite soon, no doubt, ere close of day.
We sat and sat, and waited long,
But it rained still and it rained strong,
That I thought it will never stop
And never cease its stores to drop.
Deciding, then, it will not cease
We made for shore with little ease,
When, oh, the pain! as there we came,
All dry and clear the air became.
Then we returned to sea once more,
When down again the rain did pour.
So growing wroth now, in a sort,
We finally gave up the sport,
And turned back to our soaking mare
And dripping team that still was there,

A Candle-Light

Hitched fast and started quickly home,
The horse being cover'd o'er with foam,
The team with mud and we with both,
That now to think of it I loathe.
We came into the house so wet
As never any man was yet;
Then hung our clothes before the fire,
That they might be a little drier.
Ourselves to bed to cure the cold
That firmly took on us a hold,
While in the pail that finny cuss
Was pleased with his revenge on us.

West Winsted, Conn., August 20, 1900.

Oh, Tell Me, Heart, What Ails Thee Now

Oh, tell me, heart, what ails thee now,
That art supposed to be at rest?
Here on the mountain's lofty brow
Discern'st thou aught that is not best?

Beneath this daily crystal sky
That smiles with pleasure all along,
Or in these groves where shadows lie,
Discern'st thou aught that may be wrong?

Lo! how the breezes whisper faint
And tell of love that is to be,
While from afar thy patron saint
Bespeaks the life that waits for thee.

The roses bloom, the saplings sprout,
New life to them the season brings;
While from the ground the crops come out,
As if upborne by hidden wings.

A Candle-Light

All else is joyful, all serene,
  And happiness is quite complete;
The droves, the flocks, the herds are seen
  In common joyfulness to meet.

The birds sing loud their songs of love,
  The wind sighs soft and murmurs low;
Full jolly are all things above,
  And happy creatures all below.

Then why, O heart, dost thou not cease
  Thy agitation all so wild?
Or stop awhile thyself to tease
  With the emotions of a child?

"Alas!" my heart said to my soul,
  "What thoughtless query askest me!
How can I rest when, on the whole,
  The world is full of misery?

"And while thou rest, behold not far
  Are millions wretched, restless men;
And while thou feed'st a million are
  Unfed and hungry in thy ken.

"And as thou liv'st death waits thee still,
As it awaits all things alive;
Hark, how the widows' voices thrill!
How weaklings cry, how orphans strive!

"And talk'st thou still to me of rest!"
The heart continued as before;
The soul then pleaded this request,—
"Oh, cease, my son, and speak no more."

West Winsted, Conn., August 22, 1900.

He's a Little Depressed at the Top

A SELF-LOVING young fellow in town,
Be whatever his name, Jones or Brown,
But a character recognized well
As the worthless, nonsensical swell,
Representing a class of his own,
In all places from hovel to throne,
May be seen any time of the day,
Anywhere, attired most any way.
In what species of animal kind
Can we look *its* true likeness to find?
To what order of genus shall *it*
By its habit most properly fit?
But I fear that a place quite unique
Must be made for this natural freak,
And its family's own little nook
Be produced in Biology's book.
For the sake of the Naturalist
I will give here its character-list:
Legs and arms it has two, each as long
As those that to chimpanzees belong;

Slender-bodied and wiry and thin,
Feeding largely on products of sin;
Its neck long, its face smooth, the skin wan;
Remote semblance still bearing to man,
Although more like the apes, and yet less,
Since its features can nothing express—
'Tis a little depressed at the top,
This peculiar, unnatural fop.

West Winsted, Conn., August 22, 1900.

Save the Jewels

THE Holy Week in ultra-holy Spain
Was celebrated with great pomp and show,
And at Madrid a long and endless train
Of dark processions wander'd to and fro;
To them the Regent Queen herself did go,
And with her presence emphasized the fact
That Spain *is* what she *was* in word and act.

While at Seville, the clouded province town,
Full populous of myth and fable false,
Where Error's shadows never cease to frown
On darkling streets and city's gloomy walls,
There solemn priests and bishops, clad in palls,
Went slowly marching to the church-bell's gong,
Hard followed by a melancholy throng.

Religious ensigns and black gonfalons
And effigies were carried in advance,
And the bejewel'd Virgin, for the nonce,
Was brought this high procession to enhance;
But lo, the Virgin burns! what foul mischance!
"Ah, save the jew'ls!" the bishops shouted then.
"Ay, save the jew'ls!" responded all the men.

West Winsted, Conn., August 23, 1900.

NOTE.—On the last day of March, 1898, occurred the incident related in this poem.

Dainty, *Sainty* Little Maid.

A SONG.

DAINTY, *sainty* little maid,
Whither hast thou lately strayed?
Is it meet
That thy feet
Should betray
All the way,
By the tiny, tiny footprints, whither thou hast strayed?

Thither have I follow'd thee,
That same evening, by the sea;
Was it meet
That thy feet
Should make way,
Ere the day,
Disappearing, and me leaving lonely by the sea?

A Candle-Light

Sainty, dainty little maid,
By a goblin-shadow stayed;
Where thy feet,
Very fleet,
Make no way
All the day,
Paralyzed by goblin-shadows by which thou art
stayed.

West Winsted, Conn., August 23, 1900.

I Love Thee And Hate Thee, O Sea

Contemplating the strength of thy arm;
Thy bewitching and natural charm;
The wild speech of thy eloquent tongue;
Thy great voice that through ages hast rung;
The fierce breath from thy nostrils that comes;
Thy pure sprays like medicinal balms;
Thy huge lips that hang fast on the shores;
Thy vast mouth that all energy stores;
Thy great head like the sky-lifted dome;
Thy vast thorax for milliards the home;
And thy great multitudinous eyes,
That are ever alert with surprise;
Thy vast body that stretches beyond
All dimensions that men ever found;
Thy great heart that eternally beats;
Thy vast brain that works wonderful feats:
When I think all these things are of thee,
How I love and adore thee, O Sea!

Then I think of the wrecks at thy cliffs,—
The yachts, frigates, and steamers and skiffs;

A Candle-Light

Of the lives that are lost on thy face;
Of those perishing in thy embrace;—
Armies swallowing year after year,
Unreserved and without any fear;
Of the thousands that die at thy feet,
Whom thy waves to eternity beat;
Of the seamen who suffer thy blight;
Of misfortune thou causest at night;
Devastations which thou dost produce;
And the terror which thou dost induce;
And the monsters whom harbors thy breast;
The wild sharks whom thou feedest at best;
All that foul and abominate kind
In thy bottomless bosom we find:
When I think in this manner of thee,
How I hate and abhor thee, O Sea!

West Winsted, Conn., August 23, 1900.

The Orphan Child

Hush, my baby, do not cry,
Mother's spirit hovers nigh;
And thy father's spirit, too,
Hovers closely, near you:
Each one praying,
Praying, praying,
That their baby be at rest;
Each one saying,
Saying, saying,
"Sleep, my infant, in thy nest."

Hush, O baby, weep no more,
Cease thy grievances to pour;
And refrain to seek the breast
Of thy mother, there to rest:
She is coming,
Coming, coming,
In the moments of thy sleep;
Ever trying,
Trying, trying,
Her maternal watch to keep.

A Candle-Light

Hush, my infant, sleep, oh, sleep,
While the angels sentry keep;
Thee to guide, and guide thee right,
Through this long and earthly night:
Ever fighting,
Fighting, fighting,
All this worldly, darksome way;
Ever striving,
Striving, striving,
Through the Night into the Day.

West Winsted, Conn., August 23, 1900.

Martinique

A REVERIE.

Upon the mighty Ocean pearls are strewn
Abundant from vast Nature's fertile lap,
Each lustrous shining, verdant, grand, august,
In tropic regions of the Newer World.
Full luminous the sun, with lavish mien,
Smiles radiant and warm the whole year round,
Them rendering like gardens of the East
Where naught but summer is beheld, and spring
Perennial lives cómplete cycles through.
Pearls of the sea, these Caribbean Isles,
And Martinique the grandest of them all,
Where lofty mountain ranges span the land
High rearing toward heaven their great peaks,
Eternally by cloud-caps decked that lend
Additional enchantment to the soil.
Warm shines the sun, and all the tropic day
Is filled with new and ever-growing life.

A Candle-Light

But it was Night that was not usher'd in
By twilight, and the Darkness was intense.
Strange is the hour, oh, wondrous strange, when Night
From out her eastern lair emerges and
Outspreads her dark, impenetrable wings.
Silence accompanies, and deep Solitude,
Her sister, comes conversant all the way.
Then is the time when souls take wing, and Thought,
In any land, soars to exceeding height.
But here on this enchanted island strange
Environments produce sensations strange,
And new conditions, elsewhere unobserved,
Produce phantasmagorial results.
The stars on high are but the eyes malign
Of evil spirits that rise from below,—
So may the native creoles think, and the
Pale moon, the sorceress of heaven, sheds
Maliferous effulgence and black light.*
Umbrageous shadows of the mountains drown
All nether things in an obscurèd veil,
And earth and sea and trees and foliage
Assume unnatural, fantastic forms.

* The inhabitants of the West Indies are very superstitious, and demonology reigns among them at present as it did in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Behind each bush a spirit lurks, and each
Tall tree a zombi harbors; goblins walk
The alleys, zombis haunt the houses, ghosts
And apparitions meet the wayfarers.
'Midst such a sea of mystery St. Pierre,
The chiefest city, lies. High-tow'ring peaks
Rise sheer above her, garlanded by clouds,
With mounts volcanean surrounding, in
Whose darksome caves the fer-de-lance, cobras,
And deadly spiders fester in their slime.
Morne Rouge, the sullen mountain, on one side,
And Piton Gélé on the other, with
The Morne d'Orange facing on the sea,
Whence the good Virgin all the seamen guards.*
Betwixt these three, down in the valley just
Outside the town, on a sequester'd spot,
Our little bungalow lay slumbering,
Lulled by a multiple, composite voice.
There in the valley of Savanna, hard
Where gambols the Savanna stream, while on
One side tall mountains rise and, opposite,
Plantations stretch beyond the eye, where, too,
The Jardin des Plantes flourishes close by,
There chose my friend,† in the small bungalow,

* A statue of the holy Virgin is placed on this high mountain for the purpose of protecting all the souls at sea.

† Hon. A. C. Yates, United States consul at the time.

His habitat betimes to make, allured
By Nature's wilderness. And on a night
We sat in the enchanted darkness, and
Our presence, not beholding, felt the more.
  Silent I sat enraptured, and my soul,
Amid the vagueness of its depths, knew not
Its bounds of mirth. Deep in the depthless heart
Of Nature where it chanced me not ere this
To be, among the tropic growths, the ferns
Luxuriant, the wondrous palms, the huge
And variable fronds, the ceibas here,
Palmettoes there, and fruit-trees all around,
There in the fullness of all things my heart
Leaped mad with joy. Hard by the door and
  'neath
The paneless casements limes abundant stood,
That mingled their sweet scents with mangoes and
The bread-fruit and the fig-trees that grew there,
Which fragrance scented all our chambers through.
A thousand voices fed our hearing sense,
That from the ocean on the east and from
The Caribbean Sea to west, the woods
That crown the awful mountains, trade-winds that
Come whispering from distant lands and tell
Of things unknown; innumerable birds
Their diverse melodies poured out, and harsh,
Low ululations, hootings, screechings, and

The crickets' chirrup, the hoarse croak of frogs,
The madden'd roarings of the river, all
United into one great echoing
And undulating song, the like of which
Cannot be well imagined. Wonderful
Beyond all comprehension Nature is
When every object takes a living form,
And every leaf or petal has a tongue;
Then who can know what secrets are revealed,
Or what deep mysteries unearthed? In
Their musical, quaint language, what grand things
They tell incomprehensible to man!
And then, methought, I heard weird melodies
Arising from the body of the Earth;
Attentively I hearken'd, and it seemed
That all the songs of generations past,
E'en since this globe has harbored Man, in strange
Fantastic tones, in languages as strange,
Have now found issue through the foliage,
Through reeds and bamboo stalks, attempting to
Give utterance to songs forgotten since.
But all at once these varied songs did blend
Into a chorus most harmonious,
And high toward the sky the song reared its
Gigantic notes, and Heav'n rebounded, Earth
Felt deep the exultation, and her breast

Heaved with emotions deep. The mountains leaped
For joy, and the great hills pranced full with glee.
The Southern Cross, the guardian above,
And wayside temples, shrines and images,
The guardians below, all seemed to speak
Approvingly of the weird midnight hour.
The shadows silently were musing, and
The shades did softly flitter to and fro;
While airy phantoms, strange, unnatural,
As if the sheeted dead rose from their graves,
Came marching through the air in file of long
Processions, endless, chanting solemn hymns.
Then peering in the darkness I perceived
No things familiar, but so much transformed,
Beyond all recognition. Objects seemed
Inverted, trees stood on their heads, the hills
Did taper downward, sky below and sea
Above, that the delusion was complete.
Dense vapors charged the atmosphere, and sheets
Of gases render'd vision difficult.
The glow-worms, sparkling, seemed like seraphim
In the far distance, and the falling stars
Gave the appearance of embattled hosts.
We ceased discoursing over the Sublime,
The goodness of man's nature, grandness of

His Soul; we stopped conversing on the hopes
And fears of human kind, the wickedness
Of many and the good of some; we ceased
Philosophizing of the hidden things,
The mysteries of the Divine, the deep
And hidden purpose of all things, the ways
Of Nature and her secret lore: all these
Were overruled by the vast mystery,
The awful beauty of the sable Night.
Silent I sat enraptured, and my soul
Amid its depths knew not its bounds of mirth.

New Britain, September 5, 1900.

NOTE.—The reason of this poem being written in blank verse rather than rhymed will undoubtedly appear plain to every reader and needs no comment or explanation. But it may be stated here that rhyme is often a hindrance in poetry rather than an auxiliary of it, since it arrests attention and draws the understanding from substance to form. Teach not the art of music to the birds of song; attempt not to purify the pure crystalline waters from an upwelling spring; turn not a river from its course; modify not the utterances of the philosopher by the intricacies of ambiguous words; and trim not thy speech with fancy embellishments, lest in the abundance thereof the speech itself be lost. So, too, hinder not the even and swift flow of thought, nor the ready coming of language by any artificiality of sound that you may impart to it, for surely the former shall only be marred by the latter. It was this rule that the author has instinctively followed in writing the above poem.

Heigh-Ho! I'm Here Again

In the great distance of the world
Have I stepped out with heart unfurled
To Pleasure's stores, Enjoyment's gift,
That into Paradise may lift
The soul oppressed, the mind subdued,
And make them thrill with life renewed;
The lessons of Experience gain,
With Wisdom's text to stock the brain,
That all the world may make a man,—
A man the world, if that he can.
'Neath tropic suns, 'neath southern moons,
To the loud ocean's martial tunes,
Upon hot sand, on the hot beach,
Or in dark woods where night-owls screech
Far in the day, mistaking quite—
So dark it is—the day for night;
From all these places to derive
The goods whereon such places thrive.
Then wearying of trav'lers' ways,
Of angry seas, of tropic days,
I turned my face toward the home
Which late I left abroad to roam.
A dull, hoarse whistle made it known

We have arrived on soil our own,
And soon the engine's bells declare
Our destination ended there.
With lissom heart and lighter feet
We stepped into the well-known street,
Myself and a small foreign dog,—
My only friend, a hairless rogue;—
To greet the people whom I know,
And be saluted as I go.
How bright the streets, the town how gay,
How clear the sky, how fine the day!
So glad to see all folks again,
The lady friends and friendly men,
And they, all they, were, too, so glad,
That with pure joy their hearts were mad,
And welcomed us, the dog and me,
Back into town; what joy to see!
A pressing hand, a friendly smile,
A nodding head, a bow of style;
"Hail! welcome back," some of them said,
And, thanking them, I shook my head.
But soon I came to my dear place
That seemed possessed of some new grace
Which never I before discerned,
Or some new charm which just I learned.
Ascending, then, the stairs with joy,
I felt myself again a boy,—

A Candle-Light

So happy and so full of glee,
For I returned where I should be.
Quick I unlocked the slumb'ring door,
And threw it open as before
I never oped a door so wide,
That with surprise the hinges sighed;
But then, on entering, behold!
Blank Vacancy, thrice manifold,
Stares in my face, and Loneliness
Declares aloud his full distress
At my long absence, and proclaims
His methods new and latest aims.
Silence and Blankness rule the house,
That naught but echoes could I rouse
To knowledge of my presence here,
At this old place devoid of cheer.
Here, little dog, my only friend,
Here will this roof its shelter lend,
'Midst empty darkness, sullen void,
For a brief moment misemployed;
A shelter both for thee and me,
Till we again put out to sea.

New Britain, September 10, 1900.

NOTE.—All new words in this volume are printed in italics.

THE END.

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